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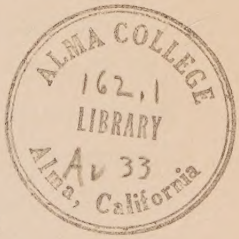
Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν.
—*Acts* xvii. 28.



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PREFACE

In the following pages I have attempted no more than to restate in simple language and upon the old philosophical basis, the natural proofs by which the existence of God is demonstrated. As far as I know, there is no small and handy English treatise upon the subject that attempts to deal with its matter upon the plan here adopted. The literature bearing upon this important philosophical question is exceedingly voluminous. Perhaps more has been written upon it than upon any other subject of human interest. Great thinkers of every age and nation have laboured upon the point. But apart from the grave initial difficulty of the languages in which their results have been stated, there is the further disadvantage that their work is scattered through almost countless volumes and fragments, making it no easy matter to gather its results, or the method by which they were acquired, into any one compendious form.

The methods to which I refer have been very

various, some of them satisfying the logical requirements of natural reason, some relying upon factors that critical reason seems to be unable to approve. The methods of rationalism and the inference of spiritualism are not those of mysticism or illumination. But these diverse methods all issue in an acknowledgment of one supreme and spiritual being, the cause and the end of all things. It is to those who desire, and with every right, a purely rational and intellectual treatment of the subject that the following pages are addressed. The fascinating persuasions of mysticism are deliberately omitted as not capable of a rational explanation without a laborious and possibly a fallacious accommodation of thought and language. What may, perhaps, be admitted in the case of the individual does not always hold good universally: and consequently, no other lines of proof than those capable of bearing an entirely rational scrutiny are advanced.

A "proof," however, it must be remembered, is the detailed statement of a line of reasoning by which the human mind, acting normally, has from certain fixed and immutable first principles of thought reached the conclusions necessarily involved in the mental process. In order to be understood, the "proof" must be assimilated. It can have no value whatever in forcing conviction. It does not produce certainty. It records it. And the whole

psychological process of the demonstrations advanced must be gone through, step by step and personally, before the conclusion reached can have any real meaning or be of any evidential value.

With this restriction of the arguments adduced, and in this view of the nature of "proof," the several demonstrations are urged as absolutely incontrovertible.

The first four chapters are concerned with certain preliminary considerations necessitated by the nature of the arguments themselves. It seemed to be better to treat the general principles, method, and distinctions separately, in order that the actual arguments might not be cumbered with explanations which might draw the attention from the main point. The reader for whom such a preparation of the ground is unnecessary will find the proofs, from Chapter V. onward, set out in order with as little extraneous matter as possible.

A far more diffuse style might have been adopted, and the examples and analogies more fully explained and worked out in greater detail, but the disadvantages arising from such a style would seem to be greater than those of a more brief and reasoned method. The direct line of reasoning is apt to be lost in the merely explanatory portions and the reader to be wearied with much that is either too abstruse or too commonplace for him. Hence I trust far

more to his enlarging and filling in for himself the few examples adduced and to his perfecting upon his own lines the analogies outlined rather than drawn in full.

F. AVELING.

WESTMINSTER,
March 7, 1906.

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THE GOD OF PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER I

TENDENCIES OF MODERN THOUGHT

"Whatever may be said against Philosophy as an instrument for construction, it is certainly valuable when we come to deal with the unconscious dogmatism into which men of science are apt to fall." [1]

Is there a God? Can we know that there is a God? Can we prove that there is a God? These are practical questions, since in the light of an affirmative or a negative answer all human affairs must be understood and regulated. They are questions perhaps more, and certainly not less, opportune now than at any other period in the history of the human race. For the age in which we live is one of the strictest investigation and of the most searching criticism. Nothing, no doctrine, theory, or opinion, is excluded from it. History, science, philosophy, theology, all alike must make good their assertions or be rejected. Theory, hypothesis, and statement,

[1] Haldane: *The Pathway to Reality.*

coming from no matter what source, are dragged before the bar of human reason to render an account of themselves: and nothing can long escape a merited censure that cannot clearly and straightforwardly make itself approved to the mind.

A highly significant and noteworthy change is taking place in modern scientific teaching and in modern philosophy. The first is seen to be abandoning positions which, a few years back, it claimed to be impregnable. It is progressing. And, as it registers and tabulates the results of its researches it dogmatises less, speculates less wildly, is more anxious to join its forces to those of that same philosophy that it formerly stigmatised as a mere tissue of word weaving and an anti-progressive brake upon the wheel of advance. The science of the twentieth century is realising more and more its descriptive function. It is going back to its old and far more exact methods: and it is looking to philosophy, as to a separate department of thought based on other foundations and pursuing other methods than its own, for a solution of the great problems that the existence of the world sets before every thinking mind. And philosophy, in its more recent forms and aspects, is drawing closer to the path in which it originally trod.

The convergence of modern thought, of both the purely scientific and the philosophical, upon the

ancient lines appears the more remarkable when we recollect how utterly those lines were obliterated by the destructive thought-systems introduced since the decadence of scholastic philosophy. Even now the old principles are almost entirely unknown to those new explorers who are steadily, and apparently quite unconsciously, drawing closer to them. It is difficult to suppose that any one system of philosophy could be begun and perfected by an individual. The completed system, as we know it, has invariably been the work of a school, the result of many tentative efforts. And thus when we discover, as indeed we do in the literature that gives expression to the mental attitude of the day, that a vital current is running through the stream of modern thought towards a philosophy that has twice at least occupied the unique position of being practically universal—and a philosophy that has never ceased to exert a very great influence upon the thinking world—we are with some reason encouraged to hope that it has set in the right direction.

Modern Philosophy

More than this, modern philosophy is notably fitting itself in more closely with the common-sense of those thinking men who are not philosophers by profession or habit. It is abandoning the shallows of crude materialism into which it was forced by thought-systems that are passing out of vogue, and

it is leaving the thick mists of an idealism in which it seemed to have no real substantiality and certainly exerted no marked influence on mankind as a whole. Still, great and fundamental changes such as these, which seem to be working themselves out towards a definite end, do not take place quickly. An individual may replace an old with a new theory in a day. But, as a general rule, even the growth of theory into popular esteem is slow; and the final modifications of systems require many years of patient labour, during which not a few workers contribute their quota to the final result.

This is, indeed, one of the best safeguards that a theory or system can have while it is in the making. Isolated investigation, testing, corroboration, correction, the opposition of counter theories: all these go towards establishing it upon a sound basis, a basis strong enough to justify its popular adoption, so long as it explains the facts it professes to explain, and while it is not contradicted by other certain truth or newer and incompatible facts. In the infancy of the exact sciences it was natural that the discoveries that were made and the hypotheses that were framed should receive a deference altogether disproportionate to their true value in the totality of knowledge. Now that science has grown older, adding enormously to her store of facts, their truer worth is being per-

ceived. The more the possible vistas of science are opened up, the more is the need of a general reconstructive philosophy realised, to co-ordinate and explain the vast mass of facts and records coming from all the sciences in one coherent thought-system. The experimental scientist who, until a comparatively recent date, announced his latest discovery to the world with a great blare of trumpets, and drew from it the most far-reaching theoretical conclusions with a confidence as astounding as it was naïve, is now for the most part contented with modestly chronicling and cataloguing his facts, or at most, perhaps, indulging in a little harmless speculation concerning them. For the modern scientist is learning the humility of knowledge. He begins to realise that his one science alone is insufficient, and indeed, properly speaking, does not attempt to explain the true natures and reasons of things. The philosopher is now more tentative than dogmatic and more critical than constructive. He too is learning his lesson, the humility of wisdom. The truth of the matter is that the scientist and the philosopher both realise that neither can do without the other in the attempt to solve problems appealing to them both, as men, with equal force. They must work hand in hand. And consequently, the scientist is giving up his attempt to construct an ideal interpretation of the world

from the limited materials at his disposal, just as the philosopher is striving to bring his guiding principles into closer touch with the recorded facts of the exact sciences. And thus the inevitable result is slowly but surely being brought about.

The gap caused by the divorce of science and philosophy and widened by their respective progress on either side along totally divergent lines, is being filled by the mutually related contributions of both. To what precise final theories this fusion of sciences will lead, what system will be born anew from this union of forces, it is difficult to predict with any semblance of certainty; but it is safe to say that the materialism of the one will go far to tone down the hazy idealism of the other, while that same idealism will help to raise the purely materialistic solution of problems to a new and more intellectual plane. We shall have a true thought-system related to all the results of exact experiment, which will be at once idealistic and materialistic. It is fairly safe to say that it will be a realistic thought-system in the best sense of the word, as the perfection and continuation of the realism of common-sense. In any case, whatever the outcome may be, the noteworthy tendency to be observed at present is towards a system of philosophy as old, in its general outline and construction, as that of Aristotle.

But a fact of perhaps yet greater importance still remains to be noticed. The problems that for centuries have been almost, though by no means altogether, out of the reach of the masses, have now become so vulgarised that there is hardly anyone, of even moderate attainments, who ignores them. The very pretensions of the attacks that have been made upon philosophy from time to time in the name of science have possibly done more than all else to awaken a new interest in the old questions. And while some of the guesses and hypotheses of the sciences, useful enough in their proper place, but falling short as explanations of reality, have had the effect of confusing the real problems, they have at any rate raised them afresh. The keen interest taken in the most fundamental questions of philosophy and in the latest and most up-to-date discoveries of science is by no means confined now to the study of the man of letters or to the laboratory of the chemist or biologist. Perhaps one of the most encouraging of the many encouraging signs of the times is the enormous and intelligent interest taken by the ordinary man and woman in these questions. Knowledge is no longer the monopoly of the scholar. If he requires a monopoly, he must turn to his learning: for knowledge has set up her throne at every street corner. In the school, the free library, the daily

Old Problems and New Answers?

paper, the working man finds his academy and his *cursus philosophicus*. And he has every right to knowledge; for his reason is essentially the same as that of the scholar. His intellect, though possibly not so highly trained, is quite as capable of dealing with the common problems. He only lacks the opportunities, the leisure, and the sometimes cumbrous apparatus of critical learning. It is unfortunate that philosophical writers have clothed their teaching in a language which it is difficult for him to understand. Perhaps to some extent this was inevitable. What is more unfortunate is that conflicting schools, and popular usage, have rendered common terms so ambiguous and common phrases so misleading. But only express a philosophical truth in words which he does understand, and his intelligence has no difficulty in grasping its import. For nature has made him fundamentally a philosopher[1]: and if lack of

[1] "The most ignorant man who knows a language possesses an incredible treasure of ideas. In the simplest conversation we may find many physical, metaphysical, and moral ideas. Take the following sentence which is within the comprehension of the lowest mind: 'I did not wish to pursue the beast farther for fear that, becoming irritated, he might do me harm.' Here are the ideas of time, act of the will, action, continuity, space, causality, analogy, end, and morality."

Time past—I *did* not;
Act of the Will—*wish*;

education has deprived him of a firm grasp and a deep knowledge of the medium of thought, if he is not a grammarian in the old sense of the term, his ideas, in most cases, are as accurately, though, perhaps, not as comprehensively, formed as those of his more fortunately circumstanced fellow-men. His principal difficulty consists, not in forming an idea or understanding it when formed, but in formulating and expressing it in, or abstracting it from, words.

Of course it is not for a moment to be supposed that all men, without any distinction, have the same comprehensive grasp upon, or deep insight into,

Action—to pursue;
Continuity of Space—farther;
Analogy—*becoming irritated;* since from irritation in other instances, it is inferred in the present; and it is also known from what happens to ourselves if molested.
Motive and end—*for fear, that irritated,* etc.;
Causality—*he might do me harm;*
Morality—*not to harm others.*
—Balmez, *Fundamental Philosophy,* translated by Henry F. Brownson, M.A., Vol. II., Book X., chap. xvii.

I may add to the above catalogue of ideas those of

Personality—I;
Individuality—the *beast;*
Change—*becoming* irritated; do *me* harm;
Hypothesis (of impossibility)—*might* do me harm;
Reality—in attributing my not wishing to pursue to the beast and its possible irritation;
Ideal representation—in the use of words.

the principles and conclusions of philosophy.[1] Such a statement would be manifestly false. But what is meant is that if philosophical truth is only suitably expressed it is calculated to appeal as much to the unlearned as to the learned. The intelligence of each is at its root precisely the same. Truth does not merely consist in words. The child come to the age of reason grasps the idea of first principles as quickly as the man does; and he understands their truth in precisely the same manner. Only, since all that is received is fashioned and shaped to the capacity of the recipient, there is ample room for an indefinite number of cases in which the content of knowledge differs in extent and in intensity.

And so the aim of philosophy is not to produce faith, nor to enforce its teaching by the mere authority of its teachers, but to induce knowledge in its learners by simply showing them the inherent reasonableness of its first principles, and by allowing them to perceive for themselves the real strength and value of the proofs it employs.

In laying stress upon these considerations, which scarcely amount to more than truisms, no attempt is made to minimise the very real difficulties in the way of becoming proficient in such a science as philosophy. Like the acquisition of any

[1] See chapters ii. and iii.

other form of knowledge, it has many obstacles in its path. There is here no royal road. For philosophy, it may be observed, on account of the extremely abstract treatment of its subject which it employs, demands even more careful thought and painstaking study than any other branch of natural science. But even so, it is not necessary to have probed to their depth all the questions to which speculation has given birth, in order to have a sufficiently clear and accurate insight into principles which are sufficient for our intellectual and moral guidance.

It is not necessary to have made a deep study of science in order to recognise certain of its truths: and it is not necessary to be deeply acquainted with metaphysics in order to perceive the certainties with which this science deals. We are not asking "how?" but "is there a God?" And these are quite different questions.

After all is said and done, the demonstrations are valid or they are not; the conclusion drawn from them is true or untrue. And if the lines of reasoning are valid and the inference correct, the thinking man or woman, and those to whom, even, the labyrinth of philosophical speculation is as yet entirely unexplored, for whom its technical terms and phrases present a more or less foreign and unknown appearance, have precisely the same intel-

lectual nature as the keenest and most profound philosopher; and one has every right to trust to this in presenting any set of demonstrations that lays claim to being conclusive. The force and logic of the proofs advanced will appeal to the reason if the proofs are valid and the arguments sound. If, for any reason, one particular line of proof fails to convince, another may, perhaps, appeal with more direct force to the individual intelligence considering them all.

The reader to whom the mechanical thought—if the expression may be allowed—of formal logic is not so familiar, and for whose mind any metaphysical ideas involved seem at a first glance to be beyond comprehension, ought to bear in mind, however, that the formal ordering and arranging of proof always presents some such apparent difficulty. Until a certain facility is acquired by training and study, we must perforce employ our natural logical faculty and more or less rough and ready, though always substantially correct, metaphysics. The warning is merely by way of a caution; for the natural faculty is generally quite trustworthy, unless it has received a false bias from without. The study of mathematics presents similar difficulties which are overcome by careful and exact thought on the part of the learner. And mathematical conclusions are in a sense more

difficult to reach than those with which we have to deal here. For the mathematical sciences deal with a particular form of abstract thought; while metaphysics, though more abstract than mathematics, lies at the very foundation of all our thoughts. It is the logic and the metaphysics of nature, then, that are really the important factor in any deep investigation. A little attention will soon dispel any difficulty, if it exists, and make the reasoning clear: and, if the formal arrangement of the proofs does seem somewhat hard and dry, the importance of the conclusions is more than enough to justify the labour involved in reaching them.

CHAPTER II

FIRST PRINCIPLES: REAL AND IDEAL ORDERS: SENSATION: CAUSALITY

"When science seeks to be a philosophy, it not only oversteps its rights, but weakens at the same time its own position." [1]

It is important at the outset that certain philosophical principles should be firmly grasped and clearly understood before we proceed to any proofs that employ them. We shall therefore, in this chapter, consider certain general truths and notions signified by terms which have a more precise meaning in philosophical thought than they have in ordinary usage. And although we shall find that the stricter signification of words is, as a rule, very well appreciated even in their common and every-day use, it is really important that careful attention be given to these few fundamental explanations. We shall begin with the distinction between the ideal and real orders, between the logical conception of things and the things as they actually exist, apart from any consideration of them on our part.

Ideas and Things

[1] Münsterburg: *The Eternal Life.*

Our senses inform us of the existence of the beings with which we are surrounded. These beings exist, or are, quite independently of us. It is true that this is a statement which cannot be proved: for it is one of those first necessary judgements to which we give our assent because of the immediate evidence they themselves furnish. In order to prove the statement we should require a further truth upon which it depended. And no such truth exists in the order which we are now considering. Indeed, from this example we perceive that it is not every statement that is capable of proof. If there were always a further principle or truth behind the one we happened to be investigating, we should go on for ever seeking what, in the hypothesis, could never be found. We must stop somewhere. And we stop here because the evidence of the truth is in itself obvious and depends upon no other truth for its support. The existence of the world is a fact. We appeal to the witness of our senses. We see it. We feel it. We do not ask what it may appear to be to some kind of intelligence other than human. For us, the testimony of our senses is overwhelming: and, since we are what we are, we must accept it. Now, what value has our ideal or mental conception of things as compared to the real or existing world? Do our thoughts correspond to the realities

of which we think? We can, with some justice, compare our minds to photographic plates upon which is imprinted a certain appearance of the real objects represented to them. In certain cases the image may be distorted, but it is generally—always, if there is no defect in the plate or the instrument—an accurate copy of the original. Only, the bright colours have disappeared, and in their place we find the familiar lights and shades and half tones of photography. Also the image is reversed. In the first part of the process of acquiring knowledge we are passive, like the photographic plate, while the world of concrete realities acts upon us from without. More or less accurately, each one of us apprehends by sensation the qualities of things. Any distortion can be traced either to the organs of sense, or, later on, to bad reasoning on the part of the individual. If we could lay bare a human mind, and actually see the way in which the sense impressions are received, we should at once be struck by the similarity, and, at the same time, by the difference which these bear to objects and qualities which originally conjured them into being. The vivid colour is no longer a colour at all: the vast expanse, the extension, is narrowed down to a mere point: the impression of hardness, or sweetness, or sound, is not the hardness of the iron, or the sweetness of the violet, or the sonorous

note of the organ. In the sensitive percipient it is transformed into a sensation: but it represents to him, just as the lines and gradations of shade represent upon the plate, the qualities of the real objects of sense from which it originated. And so sensation in general is a vital conjunction of the object perceived with the perceiving subject, by which the object in a spiritual, and not in a material manner, becomes identified with its subject. Each sense is affected by some particular aspect of reality. It does not so much matter what it is in the object that causes sensations. The important point is that they are caused at all, and that different objects call up different sets of sensations.

Let us now go a step further. If we develop our simile of the photographic plate by adding another process sometimes employed by photographers, we shall obtain a composite picture. Let us suppose that negatives have been taken of a hundred different individuals, and a print made by exposing the sensitised paper for a short time under each. The result is a portrait like to all the originals and yet like to no one of them in particular. Universal Ideas

The intellect, or reason, or mind, receives all the impressions of which we have been speaking from without, through the channels of sense. It then unites the objects of each class into a sort of

composite picture. The various impressions which go to form our idea of man in general are derived from individuals. Reason, acting like the photographer in the production of his composite portrait, combines these impressions, leaving out all that is purely personal and individual, and carefully guarding what is necessarily common to each. And thus we obtain what is called a universal idea, applying alike to every individual of the class, yet having no note of that limitation which would restrict it to the resemblance of one particular thing.

What we actually do perceive is not the mental process, as I have here endeavoured to portray it, but the physical counterpart of the process really existing in the world outside us. Not that we must understand by this that the universal idea exists apart from individuals. Properly speaking, the universal idea exists only in the perceiving intellect, where it is stripped of the material conditions of sense-images and contains only the immutable and essential element of the individual or class. With this distinction borne in mind, we are quite safe in assigning a perfect harmony between the real order of existing beings, as cause, on the one hand, and the ideal order of thought, as effect, upon the other.

Cause and Effect

A second most important preliminary examination is that of our idea as to cause and effect. The

existence of the causal link between various beings is, like the truth that beings exist independently of us, indemonstrable. It is, like the existence of the world, a fact which we perceive: and its truth is not proved by argument but seen upon reflection. As a rule, the common idea of cause is sufficiently accurate, but it is generally limited to one particular form of cause, namely, that of the agent producing any change or effect. To make the matter perfectly clear, we shall examine the conditions that are necessary for any effect to be brought about. Supposing we wish to model a bust in clay; or better, suppose we wish to ascertain the conditions necessary for the modelling of a particular clay bust. First of all there is the clay. If there is no clay, obviously there can be no clay figure. This is called the *Material Cause* of the finished figure. It is the material from which it is made: and to it are given the particular features, or figure, which is intended.

But this same figure is as important a condition of the bust as the clay itself. Without it there is no bust. The figure produced in the clay is called the *Formal Cause.*

Just as necessary to the being of the effect is the artist who does the modelling: the active, effective, or *Efficient Cause* of the bust; and lastly there is his purpose, the end which he proposed in

undertaking and carrying out his plan of modelling at all. This end or purpose which prompted the efficient cause to act is known as the *Final Cause.* We can omit the condition of time which enters into every change, or production of effects, that we know, as it, though certainly a necessary condition, cannot be strictly considered to be a real cause. It does not in any way give being to the effect produced.

Change

The example which has just been given is one in which the change, or effect, was a purely accidental one. The clay still remains clay as it was before it was fashioned into a bust. The substance is identically the same; and nothing more is altered than the configuration.

But if we consider a substantial change, we shall find that exactly the same conditions are required. The same four causes come into play and they are given the same names. A simple chemical change—any effect produced by chemical action—will prove the most familiar and suitable example. If iron filings and flowers of sulphur are mixed together, the result is an artificial or mechanical mixture: the change of state is merely a new relationship between the particles of the iron and of the sulphur. An accidental effect has been brought into being by the bringing together of the four conditions or causes upon

which the mechanical mixture of iron and sulphur depended.

But suppose further that heat is applied. The iron and the sulphur, up to this point separable and distinguishable by mechanical means, disappear; and a new substance,[1] possessing a set of entirely new properties, is brought into being. It is known as sulphide of iron, because of its two ingredients: but it is no more sulphur, or iron, or a mixture of the two, than gold or copper-oxide is. We perceive a substance, not by our senses, but intellectually, as underlying the characteristic qualities belonging to it and acting upon our senses. There is no other way of reaching the thing—substance—or attaining the conception of it. And when the original characteristic qualities have been entirely lost and a new set of accidents, as they are sometimes called, brought into being, we naturally and necessarily infer that a new substance has taken the place of the old.

Before we seek for the causes of substantial change, we may very well pause here to ask if there is not something quite identical in the new substance with the old. There has been no annihilation. The old substance has become the

[1] Substance from *sub* + *stare*—to underlie: the reality underlying appearance, in which the qualities from which we infer it inhere and which does not itself inhere in any further reality.

new; but, during the change, we have actually had the matter in which it took place before our eyes. If necessary, we could have carried out the entire experiment upon a balance, and we should then have found that nothing is lost in weight during the bringing about of the effect. We naturally conclude, therefore, that there is something permanent, something as characteristic of the first substance as of the second: and this, as we shall see in a moment, is matter—not matter such as sulphur or iron; *that* does not remain; but the inform matter[1] of which everything material—iron-rust or gold, water or hydrogen—is composed.

What, then, are the causes to which such substantial changes as that which we have just considered are due? They are precisely the same four that we have found present in the production of accidental[2] effects. In the experiment described, the acting, effective, or efficient cause, is heat. It is the chemical action of heat upon the mixture which brings about the change in substance. The material cause is the permanent matter entering into the composition of the iron and sulphur, as

[1] *Inform* matter, *i.e.*, a potentiality which is the intrinsic determinable principle of all material beings.

[2] I need not remind my readers that accidental is used here in the philosophical sense just explained.

well as into that of the newly caused effect, sulphide of iron. The formal cause is the new principle induced in the matter by the activity of the efficient cause, in virtue of which the matter becomes and is definitely, in the experiment considered, sulphide of iron, displaying all the characteristics of this, and of no other, substance. There is no substance that has the sum total of qualities belonging to iron sulphide except iron sulphide. And, as these specific accidents or peculiar qualities do not exist in iron or in sulphur, which are composed of the same matter with *their* respectively proper formal causes, they are to be attributed to the new formal cause or principle of iron sulphide which has been brought into play. There is nothing else to attribute them to. It is more difficult in this case to assign the final cause of the change. Undoubtedly it is to be sought for in the explanation of the chemical law that, under the action of heat, iron filings and flowers of sulphur unite chemically to form sulphide of iron. But to us, accustomed as we are to look to the action of free agents for the justification of ends, it will be more simple to go back a step to the experimenter who applies heat to the mixture of sulphur and iron, in order that he may obtain the new substance. Hence, from this point of view, the final cause is the total effect, considered as the object, or end, or aim,

of the experimenter. It may be that he wishes merely to perform the experiment; it may be that he requires the iron-sulphide; in any case, he has some purpose in doing what he does, without which he would never have acted at all. It will be noticed that the destruction, or removal, of the original formal cause or causes is involved in the production of the new effect: but as this removal does not directly influence it in its being, and is merely a condition *sine quâ non*, it is not numbered among its causes.

From this examination of substantial change, we perceive that two of the causes have a very intimate connection with the effect. In fact they *are* the effect in existence. The material and the formal cause constitute it in its proper and specific nature. As long as it exists, they exist: and when, for example, iron-sulphide is deprived of its "form," it ceases to be what it was, and ceases, consequently, to display the characteristics of iron-sulphide. When we undertake to examine our simplest ideas of causality or to explain the nature of being, we are obliged to look upon every actual existing material being as having these two principles within it—the matter, which it shares in common with all other material beings, and the form, which differentiates it from beings not identical with it in

substance. The other two causes are both also closely connected: the final being the intention of the agent, and his actual operation being the efficient cause. They are not principles within, but causes without, the effect.

From this theory, the truth of which is clearly seen upon reflection, and which, further, stands every test to which it can be subjected, we may gather the absolute independence of the efficient cause. It in no way depends upon its effect. The latter is always dependent upon the former; either in being, or at least in the process of becoming. But the contrary is never true. The only conceivable dependence of an efficient cause upon its effect is that of action in certain hypothetical cases and by reason of the final cause. If a cause A, for example, is to attain an effect B, A must act. That is to say B, viewed as the end or object to be attained, is the motive, not physical but intentional, of action for the efficient cause; and without the presence of such a motive this cause does not operate. There is one point which should not be passed over without a word of explanation. The doctrine of causes just set forth may seem to clash in some measure with a form of the hypothesis so well known as the atomic theory. This is not the place to discuss the merits or defects of any

Efficient Cause

purely scientific theory, whether it be of atoms, or molecules, or electrons: but it is very important to indicate clearly that these and kindred theories, as they are advanced by science, really do not attempt to explain the ultimate constitution, or essence, of substance. They do not set themselves to answer the problem raised by philosophy at all. If they did, the philosophical aspect of the question is at once put in its proper light by the questions:—What then is the essence of the atom? What is the principle that differentiates an atom of gold from an atom of hydrogen or of lead? Philosophy does not, strictly speaking, enter into the calculations of the chemist; nor does chemistry deal with the questions of philosophy.

The physiologist explains that the human brain consists of certain well-known fibres, tissues, and structures, which he names and classifies. The chemist asserts that it is formed of elements equally well known to him. The philosopher states that, in the last analysis, it is a part of a single substance—man—and that precisely as it is an integral part of man, it is, like all material effects, no more than common matter, endowed or "informed," with the principle which makes man what he is. All three are right, each in his own department of science. But the

philosopher takes into consideration the essential nature of the object he is considering. He does not necessarily seek to know its apparent structure or the factors which, while not actually existent in it, may be derived from it by the destructive process of chemical analysis.

It is noteworthy that in this analysis the actual qualities of the compound are destroyed and entirely new characteristics brought into being — a fact which indicates a change of substance.

The philosopher strives to perceive the essence of the individual thing, or being, under examination, be it as large as a mountain or small as an electron. And it is highly significant that, in the last resort, no one of the other sciences ever attempts to answer the question as to essence. Philosophy alone professes to give the unique answer: and we must bear this answer in mind when we proceed to reason, as we shall do in later chapters, from effect to cause. The importance of this doctrine of causes, which has here been so briefly indicated, is incalculable. It not only appears in the treatment of the subsequent chapters of this volume, but is continually cropping up in every problem and every question with which philosophy deals. And if even for this reason alone the subject

merits every attention. If it has not been dwelt upon sufficiently to make it quite clear at a single reading, I can only hope that the reader will attempt to think it out for himself. He will find the indications that have been given quite sufficient to enable him to obtain a firm grasp of the question, and will not unnaturally feel his conviction of its truth strengthened by his own personal development of its exactness.

CHAPTER III

THE METHOD OF DEMONSTRATION

"In matters of the intellect, follow your reason as far as it will take you, without regard to any other consideration." [1]

"Although God transcends sense and the objects of sense, nevertheless sensible effects are the basis of our demonstration of the existence of God." [2]

"*Is there a God?*" We come back again to the original question, after having developed and strengthened our natural and common-sense notions of reality and cause, as a preliminary to answering it.

There are two ways in which we apprehend truth. Attention has already been drawn to this fact in the previous chapter; but we have now to consider towards which of the two methods we should turn in our search for an answer to the question with which we are mainly concerned. Is it true that we answer it immediately, as soon as we have grasped the meaning of the terms in which it is expressed? Do we know the reply intuitively? Or do we take some principle, or truth, from which a

[1] Huxley: *Agnosticism.*

[2] St Thomas Aquinas: *Contra Gentiles,* I. 12.

Is the Demonstration from Cause to Effect or from Effect to Cause?

"yes" or a "no" can be inferred by deduction? Do we demonstrate God's existence by and through a cause? With this latter alternative we can at once dispense, if we have any idea of God at all. And for the moment we will suppose that we have some such idea. Of course, if we are going to set about our subject philosophically, we must begin with a negative doubt, or suspension of judgement, as a preliminary non-committal attitude of mind. We should not, perhaps, even have asked the question in this form; but cast it in other terms as, for example, *Why do things exist?* or *How can they be?* But since, as a matter of fact, the term God does correspond to some conception in our minds, we are at liberty to employ it here; to employ it, at any rate, in stating that the existence of such a being could not possibly be proved by a reference to its cause. If it is caused, it is distinctly not God in any sense in which we can employ the term. We turn, therefore, to the first alternative: and here we meet with a very real difficulty. Do we recognise the truth of the statement "God exists" intuitively, at once, as it were instinctively, the moment we have grasped the meaning of the two terms *God* and *exists?* Some people hold that we do: and I venture to

think, as a matter of fact, that very many actually do base their so-called knowledge of, or faith in, God upon some such an assertion. On account of the great learning and confident assurance of some of those who have advanced this answer to the question, I give their argument in its best and truest form: although I must warn my readers that it is generally held to be an unwarrantable abuse of reasoning and an invalid proof. "I possess an idea," so runs a classical form of this argument, "of a being which is in itself most perfect;" or, "God is that than which no greater can be thought. Therefore such a being, God, must exist. For if He did not exist, my idea would not be of the most perfect being; and a greater could be thought, namely, a being which does exist." If the truth of the existence of God is not grasped and realised at the very instant in which we understand the meaning of the terms, it is impossible to define God, even in the vaguest language, until we have proved that a being exists and already called it God. Then, and only then, can we attempt to define. We do not begin with definitions of things and then evolve their characteristic qualities in our minds. We begin with the qualities and then impose a name upon the being possessing them.

The Old Ontological Argument

Nor could we infer the existence of God from an idea in any case. We would have as much reason in supposing the real existence of a winged horse, or of a mountain composed of one single diamond, simply because we are capable of forming fantastic ideas of such things. Of course, if we saw a winged horse or a diamond mountain, our ideas would have some value as corresponding to real things: but from the bare idea, unless formed correctly from the data of sense—and this point will be considered later on—we have no logical right to infer the existence of anything. We have not, then, in this form of argument, any real indication of the answer to our question; since we are unable to approve of an abrupt transition from the logical, or ideal, order to the real. In other words, any ideas we may possess of existing things are valuable only as being derived, either directly or by way of demonstration, from the realities of which they are the ideas.

We may here omit the evidence of historical testimony as a mode of acquiring truth; as it also ultimately requires precisely the same justification of reason as our own personal observations. But it will be well, before passing on to the third rational manner of reaching truth, to touch upon another form in which it is not uncommonly

asserted that our knowledge of God comes to us. Do we possess an answer to our question merely by faith? Do we believe, rather than know, that God exists? Of course it is quite possible that we may find individuals who cannot be strictly said to know, but who certainly do believe in the existence of God, either because of the teaching of credible authorities in whose assertion they trust, or because of the vaguely realised and undefined sentiment known as personal feeling. And we cannot blame such people when we remember that most of us receive by far the greater part of our information from others, and, strictly speaking, hold it on faith. By far the great majority of our items of scientific knowledge comes to us in this way. No one individual has the time, or the opportunity, or even the inclination, to conduct every experiment and verify every observation for himself. But, if there is nothing more than this possible in the case which we are considering, if no rational proof exists—proof quite as solid and cogent as that which we require in other departments of knowledge when we ourselves undertake to investigate—such a blind belief is both unreasonable and untrustworthy. We can excuse a lack of strict knowledge in some—and even in many—individual cases; but we should be unable to pass this trustful sort of faith as

Faith

sufficient for all men. A belief not founded, somewhere or other, upon knowledge, such as this would be, is insecure, changeable, doubtful. It could not stand a reasonable scrutiny or the ordinary tests of criticism.

Reason

The human reason must be capable of knowing certainly that God exists. If not, it has absolutely no warrant for believing it. And further, in the untrue hypothesis that we are incapable of attaining any intellectual certainty as to this truth, all other beliefs built upon it, as upon their base, would at once become utterly impossible and irrational. Surely we cannot imagine that, if there is a God who has created our intellect, He has allowed it to exact reasonable conditions of knowledge which can never be complied with! Surely reason is not to be supposed utterly incompetent and irrational when it attempts to deal with its own most vital interests! No. The existence of God, if God exists, needs some other, and more satisfactory, basis than a blind faith which can never be verified in any reasonable manner.

We have already seen that we have no immediate intellectual perception of the truth or falsehood of the assertion; that to seek to demonstrate it from its cause is impossible; and that mere belief or faith is not generally a

sufficient or reasonable motive of certainty, at any rate in this case. Even the individual who does accept and hold the truth, that God exists, on the authority of others, ought to seek for its intellectual justification in his own mind. He is a reasonable being. He is capable of understanding any proofs that are to be found. His own interests are staked upon the truth which, in his investigation, is the result of his enquiry. And his religious beliefs, if he has any, depend upon, and, in the last analysis, demand, a reasonable certainty here.

Reasoning from Effect to Cause

We turn, therefore, to the third method of reaching truth: the reasoning which proceeds, upwards, from effect to cause. Now this form of reasoning may be such that we are able to infer the cause and its nature as soon as we know the effect; just as we know that the cause of the ears of wheat waving in the field was the seed, or grain of wheat which, under certain conditions, possessed the power of germinating and bearing fruit. In this example and in many similar ones the cause and the effect are naturally alike. They belong to the same species and have the same nature: and, consequently, we can reason from the one to the other without any difficulty.

But there are causes which are not similar

in nature to their effects; causes which have something, but not everything, in common with the things they produce. For instance, to keep to the case we have just considered, there is the causal action of the sun, or of the moisture in the ground, which plays its part in the germination of the grain of wheat by setting in action its latent power of bursting forth into life. Now neither the sun nor the moisture can be looked upon as being of the same nature as the germinating seed or as the last effect produced — in this case, the ears of wheat. But they have this in common with their effect — both are material in their nature and both have certain commonly shared qualities; and, as such, both belong to the same greater class or genus which embraces, at the same time, the wheat, the damp earth, and the sun which supplies the necessary warmth. In cases such as this we are able to infer the fact that there is a cause, or that one has been working: and we are generally competent to say something at once as to its nature and qualities.

But we cannot always be certain that we have succeeded in finding the right cause, or that we have a very detailed knowledge of it. To take refuge in chemistry again for an example. I

hold in my hand a test-tube containing a colourless liquid. To this I add a few drops of another liquid equally colourless. Immediately a cloudy mass is perceived; a precipitate has been formed in the test-tube. But, since many substances yield a precipitate with sulphuretted hydrogen, and since some of these precipitates bear a certain close resemblance to each other, I am not yet perfectly certain as to what base has been the cause of the precipitate which I have obtained—though I am certain that there is some cause for the sulphide which has been formed. Or, to insist with a more vulgar example—I find a letter, written in French and addressed to me, upon my table. It has no signature, and I do not recognise the handwriting. The first thing that I am prepared to assert is that someone has written the letter; and I am tolerably certain from its style and composition that its author was a Frenchman. But with these indications only at hand, I cannot decide whether the letter was written by A, B, or C. Hence, while I am quite certain of the existence of a cause and possess a moderate knowledge of its nature, I cannot altogether claim to have a complete insight into or understanding of it. But we may discover, as indeed, if the proofs adduced are worth anything, we

shall discover later on, that a cause is conceivable which has not even this much in common with its effects. In such a case the cause is called *analogous*,[1] by which term is signified that the effect is only proportionately similar to it and does not share any of its characteristics precisely *as they are found in it.* There will be no difficulty in concluding from this that, though we may succeed in proving the existence of such a cause, we shall not at once have any very accurate or clear idea of its nature. As a matter of fact, we shall find that whatever words we employ in trying to define it, are insufficient, and, in a sense, only partially true. However, as a special chapter will be devoted to this point later on, we shall not stop to consider it in greater detail here.

We have now discovered the direction in which we must proceed, the method which we must use in any attempt to answer the question, "*Is there a God?*" Any proof adduced must be *à posteriori*, arguing from the effect to the cause; and not from the cause to the effect. And we must not expect at once to reach any very clearly defined conception of the nature or essence of the cause to whose existence a consideration of nature will lead us. We shall

[1] See p. 80, *note.*

consequently in the immediately following chapters, in which the main lines of proof are given, briefly state each problem of nature which we have to consider, develop the particular line of reasoning to be employed in each, and from it draw a conclusion, which, in every case, will be found a sufficient and satisfactory answer to our original question.

CHAPTER IV

A FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION—POSSIBLE AND ACTUAL EXISTENCE

"A knowledge of God is said to be inborn in us in that by principles inborn in us we can easily perceive that there is a God."[1]

ALL the objects which together form the world of our experience are possible. A possible being is one that may exist. All beings that actually do exist are obviously possible, as well as all those in the conception of which there is no inherent contradiction. This truth is expressed in language by the use of the words *actually* and *potentially*—two terms to which all possible existences can be transcendentally referred. The filament of an incandescent lamp through which a current of electricity is passing, or a lighted candle, is *actually* an illuminant. The former disconnected from the current, the latter unlighted, is an illuminant *potentially* only.

[1] St Thomas Aquinas: *Opusc.*

These two words, the existence of which in language indicates the necessity of expressing a philosophical thought, relate to two conditions of the possible. The former is derived from the verb to act, do, or perform. The wheel that is turning the millstone is actually doing work. The stream of water flowing over it is in act. The stone that falls to the ground, the movement of the hand guiding a pen, the light waves passing through the ether, all these are active each according to its nature. To activity of this kind I shall refer as operation in order to distinguish it from the act-of-being or existence, with which all the objects which together form the world of our experience are endowed. The mill-wheel, waterfall, stone, hand, and ether all exist, or are actually in being. They are so, and we conceive of them as essentially so, before they can exercise any secondary activity or operation whatever. Meanwhile, they are potentially operative; and when their potentiality becomes actual operation, when they perform work, they are only accidentally changed. It is the same millstone whether it rests or turns, the same hand, writing or idle, the same stone, supported or falling. In order to comprehend a substantial activity, or potentiality, we must turn to other examples and seek in substantial change

the true concept of the act-of-being or the power-to-be. The reactions of chemistry, the corruption and generation of organic matter, the operations of living beings, furnish us with suitable cases of substantial change; that is to say, of a change in which the body or object affected ceases to be what it was and becomes something else. We judge that the gases oxygen and hydrogen differ from water and from each other in substance because of the various qualities which each of these three possesses. The first gas and water vapour are non-inflammable, while hydrogen is highly so. The three bodies in a gaseous state and at the same temperature and atmospheric pressure weigh, equal volumes being taken, proportionately 32 : 1 : 9. According to Faraday's law, an atom of oxygen is capable of conveying a quantity of electricity twice as great as that conveyed by an atom of hydrogen.[1] Their specific heat varies in a fixed and constant proportion. It is not necessary to recapitulate all the characteristic qualities which manifest to us the diverse substances possessing them. Our mode of thought—and I conceive it to be a necessary mode of thought—would, though coming to us as it were with our nature, be essentially unnatural were it at fault here. We must

[1] See also Ramsay: *Modern Chemistry,* First Part, p. 36.

work with what we find, from what we know, with what we really possess. We have no right, unless we are prepared to sacrifice what we call reason, to neglect or ignore what we perceive either with our physical or our mental vision. From every indication by which we can judge, the gases oxygen, hydrogen, and water vapour are substantially different; just as each thing is in reality different from all others that exhibits qualities differing essentially from theirs. Even if we are inclined to accept the atomic theory in its chemical aspect, and employ it to the fullest extent in its proper place, an atom of any one element is, for the philosopher, a substance entirely distinct and diverse from an atom of any other. And yet water can be decomposed by an electric current, by metallic sodium, or by intense heat; and oxygen and hydrogen, already potentially existing in it, become actually existent; while the original substance, water, from an actuality passes again into no more than a mere potentiality.

The decay of organic matter, the passing of a plant or animal from that kingdom to which, in virtue of its life, it belongs, to an inorganic world, the bursting of a seed, the potential plant, or the conversion of inorganic matter into vegetable cells, are further examples of a similar

process. In all of these changes a real substance retires into potentiality, and a potential substance becomes actual. It may be objected that the substratum—matter—is always the same, eternal, indestructible. But who can tell us what matter is? It is not certainly even thinkable without some principle, other than itself, which brings it under our ken. It cannot exist at any rate, neither have we any example of its existing, nor can we think of it as existing, without some such principle. The abstraction of matter belongs to metaphysics. It is not, in and by itself, an entity. It does not exist except as this or that particular matter; and this and that matter is matter differentiated from all other, and from abstract matter as well, by the principle which actuates it and makes it this or that. It is oxygen or hydrogen, gold or copper, wood or flesh, water or earth, dead vegetable or living animal tissue, never matter without any differentiating principle. Matter as such does not exist. No one has seen it: no one can see it. Properly speaking, no one can imagine it—though it may be thought—for it is no more than a purely passive potentiality.

CHAPTER V

THE NECESSARY BEING

"A necessity of my reason constrains me to believe the existence of God." [1]

Among existing things we find possible or contingent beings. These postulate a necessary being which contains in itself the reason of its own necessity. This necessary being we call God.

This is the classic argument or proof which, from the consideration of possible or contingent beings, passes on to a conclusion that at least one absolutely necessary being exists. But it is the classic argument stripped to the barest possible statement of the inference. Upon what principle does its force depend? How is it that the existence of possible beings supposes and demands the existence of a necessary being. For us the absolutely necessary belongs to the ideal order—to the realm of thought. We abstract it mentally from the existences which we perceive by our

[1] Cardinal Manning: *Religio Viatoris.*

senses. None of these are necessary. We cannot put our finger upon anything in the world and say "this is an absolutely necessary being." If it be *matter*, we have never perceived it; *energy*, it is incomprehensible to us; something apart from both matter and energy, it is equally withdrawn from the region of sense. Yet we are certain of the existence of being, and this absolutely necessary. This certainty may have been produced by a profound understanding of the doctrine of causes. It may have grown unconsciously in our minds. For, whether we pay attention to the working of our reason or not:—that is to say, whether we reflect upon the subjective states through which we pass, and upon the mental acts which we perform, or not—it seems to be a matter which admits of no doubt that certain sense-perceived data are combined and separated involuntarily by the intellect into well-defined general principles and conclusions. The very ease with which this faculty normally works has led grave thinkers to suppose that certain of our ideas are innate. This supposition has never been proved to be true, and it is consequently generally rejected as a mistaken judgement. Some of the greatest intellects that have illuminated the world from the earliest glimmerings of thought to the present day have given another and a truer explanation, in the

natural ease with which the faculty of reason works. Be it as it may, we have an idea of a necessary being, just as surely as we possess the idea of necessity in all the truths of geometry. Necessity From this idea alone we are not at liberty to infer its reality: but join to it the evidence of experience, and we have a demonstration of the real existence of an absolutely necessary being.

Let us conceive a moment in which absolutely nothing, neither necessary nor possible being, existed. Can we conceive a becoming, a beginning, a commencement of being? Is it possible to think a something arising from this universal nothing? Such a thought would be a mere sport of fancy—not a sober judgement of reason. We cannot think or conceive of being springing from universal not-being.

But in the world of our experience we do perceive the existence of beings exterior to ourselves. In this experience we perceive our own individual existence. I exist.[1] I am a real being. I cannot, it is true, get behind this primitive fact of knowledge; but I am unable to deny it or even

[1] The truth which even Descartes could not doubt: although he unwarily attempted to prove it. His proof has perhaps a value as an *argumentum ad hominem*, for himself; just as that of St Augustine, *quod si fallor, sum*, "and if I am mistaken, I am," *i.e.*, the fact that I am mistaken proves the fact of my existence.

to call it in question. Since, then, something or some things in reality do exist, it is a necessary consequence of reason to admit the existence of an absolutely necessary being.

I may here be permitted to make a digression. It is both curious and interesting that our idea of the absolutely necessary is so profoundly associated in our mind with the general idea of being from which it springs, that we apply it to existences other than those which reason warrants our conceiving of as really necessary. We think of substance, of matter, of motion, of ourselves, as eternal and necessary. We cannot realise the immortality of our soul except as in its proper place going towards the being of our entire personality. And yet philosophical speculation can give no guarantee of the permanence or reconstruction of the human person after death as he exists while living: and science, as far as it goes, is unable even to assert the persistence of the separated soul.

If then some or any things at all exist, and no systematic doubt or power of the imagination will permit us to deny that they do, a being, not only hypothetically, but actually and absolutely necessary, exists and always has existed: whose cause is not to be found in any other being, or cause, or principle, but uniquely

and adequately in itself. Its essence and its existence, as we shall see later when treating of its nature, are identical. IT IS. We have in truth an idea which corresponds to a reality—necessary and sufficient. We have an idea of God.[1]

Is it not possible, it may be asked, that this metaphysical consideration in leading us to what you call God, has led us to matter or motion or to both; that one or both of these are necessary and sufficient; that the proof advanced gives us no warranty of an extra-mundane reality, self-sufficient and absolutely necessary, which you call God? Does not this argument bear a pantheistic interpretation? Is this God?

[1] Though it is anticipating a proof to be given later on, this argument may be cast into a form, the conclusion of which issues in an intelligent (and consequently volitional) necessary being. If any thing ever began to be, some thing at least must have existed and this eternally. Now this eternal being must be intelligent: otherwise its relations could only be to already existing things. It could have no relation to the purely possible. And therefore the non-existing could never have begun to be: for an action, a relation, of the existing and non-intellectual could not reach to the non-existing: since it is only by the translation of a pre-existent intellectual idea into actuality that not-being can be made to give place to being. Consequently if anything ever began to be, an intellectual and eternal necessary being exists. This proof, *mutatis mutandis*, may be applied to the beginning of change in an existing world: and, though here it does not necessarily prove an infinite necessary being, it does demonstrate a necessary intelligent being apart from the nature in which the change takes place.

Such questioning would show a superficial grasp of the pith of the reasoning adduced. It could not be seriously advanced were the nature of our idea of the necessary being fully examined. Still it may be well to anticipate such an objection while the subject is fresh in our minds. We have inferred the existence of a necessary being from the fact of the existence of possible, or changeable, beings. The essence of the necessary consists in this that it is neither possible (taking the word in its limited sense) nor changeable, for, if we have inferred as necessary a being which admits of change from being to not-being or from not-being to being, or from being this to being that, reason obliges us to go further, in order to account for it, and to infer from this a new being, self-existent, self-sufficient and absolutely changeless. No being with which our senses have acquainted us fulfils such a conception. The world of our experience contains no such existence.

Could it then be matter, or motion, or both taken together? What is matter? We call air and water and iron matter. It is a general term common to all that appeals to our sense perception. It corresponds to an idea acquired by abstraction. As such, matter does not and cannot exist: much less could it exist as necessary and change-

less, since that constituent of existing beings which we conceive under this name is perpetually being affected by change. We do not, by considering possible existence, abstract from its idea that further idea of necessity as belonging to it. Matter we conceive of as belonging to all the beings with which our senses put us in touch. It may be a permanent reality manifesting itself under many forms. It may have an eternal existence as the substratum of perpetual change. But it has not the note of necessity in itself: and, as far as our experience goes, we have no reason for supposing that it can even exist alone.

But motion? Perhaps this may be the necessary existence which is at the same time the true explanation of, and the sufficient reason for, the existence of purely contingent and possible things. A little reflection will soon dispel the difficulty. Motion, as we conceive it, is inseparable from bodies. We are unable to think of motion without something which moves.

In the previous development of the classic argument from existence we found ourselves behind the phenomena of motion. We considered the essence of things that move or are moved: and it is precisely an explanation of the possibility of beings which exist, and, consequently,

are capable of motion, that we seek. Motion might be eternal but it, as well as matter, lacks the note of necessity in itself, just as we have seen that matter does: and that note of necessity is the precise characteristic of the existence which must be inferred from all beings that are merely possible. Neither matter nor motion is God.

But is it possible that matter and motion taken together are the necessary being, depending upon no reason of necessity but an inherent one?

We have seen that matter is not appreciable to sense perception except as involved in the essence of this or that existing being. Motion can only exist as a property of existing beings. This property may be present or absent. It is a possibility and not a necessity. If matter, then, which does not contain in its essence the necessity which we have found to belong to that being which explains and accounts for all possible existences be possessed of the property of motion, if matter be in perpetual movement, would not this be a sufficient explanation of the existence of those beings which we have designated as possible? Would not this moving matter be God?

It is difficult to conceive of matter absolutely

at rest. The teaching of science leads us to believe that there is as a matter of fact no such state. It is perpetually changing, receiving, storing up, and transmitting energy. The things or substances with which we are acquainted are transformed from one nature to another under the influence of some cause that produces substantial change. If, in the objection put forward, matter means substance in this sense, it is obvious that an attempt to account for the original difficulty of change in the possible is made by simply pointing to the change itself. On the other hand, if by matter is meant that which is conceived of as enduring before, through, and after the substantial change—as we may conceive the matter that, for example, possesses the forms of oxygen and hydrogen still remaining when the oxygen and hydrogen cease to exist and the existence of water begins — we have an idea corresponding to an abstract something which cannot exist by itself, but which needs some one form of energy or another to keep it within the realm of actuality at all. And such a being, even combined with energy or motion, contradicts all the knowledge we possess or are able to infer of the absolutely necessary.

Matter seems to be enfolded in mystery.

Motion is as mysterious in its nature. Matter endowed with motion presents innumerable problems to the mind of the scientist and the philosopher. But in this one point at any rate there is no room for doubt. Neither the one nor the other nor both combined is a necessary being. Each and both together require an explanation of their possibility. That explanation can be found only in an absolutely necessary existence. And this absolutely necessary existence we call God.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST MOVING POWER

"The immense progress of the sciences only assures it (the natural theology of Aristotle) an importance which grows from day to day. The more the analysis of phenomena becomes exact and far reaching, the more the need is felt of going back to the origin of things, and even up to their first Motive Cause." [1]

"Their places and their courses had not been ordered so wisely, so fittingly and so regularly, in respect of their positions and their seasons, were there not one unchanging God to wield them. Him, as He is the Good One, I call by the name of God, even as all creatures call Him." [2]

We continually perceive the existence and the fact of motion in the phenomena with which we are surrounded in the world of sense. From the fact of the existence of any motion at all in the sensible world the existence of an absolutely first and immovable motive power is necessarily inferred. This first and immovable motive power we call God.

[1] B. St Hilaire: *Métaphysique d'Aristote.*

[2] King Alfred's version of the *Consolations of Boethius* (*done into Modern English*—Sedgefield).

Motion

We must here again begin with an examination of motion itself, in order that, furnished with as precise and exact a notion as is possible of its nature, we may be in a position to look for its true explanation. There is nothing with which we are more familiar than this; and yet it is one of those curious everyday things about which, as a rule, we can be said to know extremely little. Most of us have a conception of motion, but in by far the majority of cases it is so vague and confused as to be practically of no real value. So little accuracy or precision is to be found in our idea of it that we have great difficulty in expressing the result of our thoughts upon it in words, or even in presenting the idea to our own minds with any distinctness. Our conception of motion is formed by our minds from a consideration of those beings or things that we perceive as moving. It will be well therefore, to begin with an examination of movable things, or bodies, inasmuch as they are movable; for these fall naturally under the perception of our senses. So that, precisely as we consider a body as movable, we have seized upon a conception of motion as the act of that body considered as movable. Now bodies move or are moved locally from place to place. In order to appreciate the nature of local motion,

four things at least have in every case to be considered; namely, the body that moves, the reason why it moves, or the cause of motion, the place from which it recedes, and the place to which it is finally moved and in which it rests. While in the act of moving, however, it is neither totally in one place nor in the other, but partly in each, if the "places" are contiguous. If the "places" are remote there is a succession of "places," or else a space between them which must be successively traversed by the moving body.

But a body which successively occupies different sites, which is partly in one and partly in another, must be quantitatively divisible. Local motion, therefore, belongs primarily and properly only to material beings. The body considered, moreover, is entirely complete as a body and not necessarily in motion before it is locally moved. In other words, the act of motion is a secondary and accidental one, and not to be confounded with the act of being or existence already alluded to in Chapter IV.

But local motion is not the only form of motion of which we form a concept. Beings are transferred not only from one place or site to another, but also change from one state to another. Under the general term "motion," we

class the passage from not-being to being, or generation; that from being to not-being, or corruption; as well as those forms of motion known as alteration, augmentation, and decretion. We may describe motion generally as any change from one state to another: or, with Aristotle, as the act of an existing being which is potentially something else, in so much as it *is* potentially something else.[1]

Aristotle's Meaning

The philosopher describes motion as an act because it is the principle of motion in an actually moving body. He uses the words "of an existing being" because that which does not exist obviously cannot move. He asserts that it is "potentially something else," precisely because, whether the motion be substantial or accidental, that is to say, whether it be a real change that is taking place or only a superficial one, it is always towards a further term not yet fully or completely reached while the motion is going on: and he adds the words "in so much as it *is* potentially something else," because when the change or motion is completed it is finished and done. The motion has then taken place, and, as motion, exists no more.

We may adopt his definition as accurate and comprehensive; and we shall find that, to no

[1] *Physica,* Book III., i. 6.

matter what special case of motion we apply it, it is in every event verified.

But a further conclusion is obtained from an examination of movable beings. Whatever is moved, is moved by some other thing. Nothing can properly be said to move itself. In other words no movable being is its own source of motion. An examination of facts will bear this conclusion out. There is no single instance, of which we can give or even think an example, that contradicts the assertion. On the contrary, in the following, to select two out of many possible examples, we are enabled to perceive its truth immediately. Take the case of a living man. His body, his limbs, move; or, to be more accurate, they are moved: for, when he dies, they no longer exercise the same function. In the corpse the movable being remains while the motive power is gone. Or again, consider the motion of attraction caused by a magnet. The power or force of attraction—whatever that may be—in the magnet, is not the body which we know as the magnet. And, if that body—iron, let us suppose—is moved towards some fixed body, which *it* attracts, it only needs that it should be demagnetised in order to show us clearly that it moves, not because it is a body,

but in virtue of some other reality which, before demagnetisation, it possessed.

We have already, from a consideration of a body in movement, arrived at a definition of motion as it is in itself. In order to understand the force of the principle that no movable body moves itself, we must further consider the distinctions of movable bodies and of motive forces. A movable body is moved either violently or naturally: and there is no question of our principle in the case of a body moved by violence and against its natural inclination. Obviously in such a case it does not move itself.

Movable Bodies and Motive Forces

Moreover, bodies naturally movable are such either because their motion is determined by some intrinsic and determinable principle, as in animals; or because their motion results naturally from an intrinsic principle already rigidly fixed and determined by the nature of the body itself. An example of this determined principle of motion is to be found in the falling stone, the movement of which is in no wise determinable but already determined by the very nature of a body subject to the law of gravity.

True motive forces, on the other hand, act either on account of their own intrinsic power or through media communicating a power which is not strictly speaking their own, but which

passes through them. Fire is an example of the former class: a pen directed by the hand, of the latter.

The motive force, moreover, which acts in virtue of its own intrinsic power, may act through one or many media so arranged in order that the initial power is transmitted through each and every one to the movable body at the end of the series.

Let us examine the two cases of the falling stone and the self-moving animal. In the former, clearly the stone does not move itself. It is moved by a force exerted upon the particles of matter of which it is composed; or, there is an attraction, a mutual inclination between these particles and those of the body towards which it tends, or falls. In the former case it is obviously moved by a force not itself. In the latter we must conclude that the inclination or attraction is not the body itself considered merely as as existing body, but that the body is moved by whatever it is that has impressed this attraction or inclination upon the particles of its matter.

In the case of living beings of which we are accustomed to think as self-moving, we must have before our eyes the essential difference between animate and inanimate nature.

The animal is moved inasmuch as it is, and

precisely because it is, a body: not inasmuch as it is an animal; else it would follow that beings that are not animals could not be moved. It moves inasmuch as it is animated: not inasmuch as it is a body; else all bodies would, like it, move themselves. Hence we are obliged to conclude that even in self-moving animals the movable potentiality and the motive force are not one and the same thing. They happen to be found united in one being, but that they are distinct and diverse, reason perceives necessarily and clearly.

To what point does this consideration lead us? No further than to the establishing of the principle that whatever is moved is moved by another being, rationally distinct from itself. But this principle necessitates the inference of a being not moved, essentially explanatory of all the motion that we perceive in the world. How is this inference obtained? The reasoning is straightforward and simple.

Series of Motions

In all the possible series of motions, we perceive beings moving others because moved themselves. We cannot credit an actual infinity of moved motors in any one of these series, or in all the series taken together. Somewhere we must stop at an immovable being which is the origin and source of motion in each series. Somewhere, in

the totality of the series, we must pause at an entirely immovable being at once the origin and source of all motion.

Let us suppose a case. A is moved by B; B by C; C by D; and so on. We may protract the series as far back as we will. A does not move unless acted upon by B; nor can B move A unless preceded by C. Somewhere there must be an X which is unmoved, and yet which is in itself sufficient to explain the motion in D, C, B, and A. If X is not given, none of the series will move; D will not act on C, C on B, nor B on A. An actually infinite series is both inconceivable and impossible.

In the same way, it is impossible to explain the existing fact of motion by supposing that it might be arranged in a circular series; that is, that A moves B; B, C; C, D; D, X; and X, A. The motion could never begin in such a series unless impressed by some motive force exterior to the series itself. It might then, in such an hypothesis, and supposing no loss from any cause in the transmission of energy, continue as an endless movement. But to explain its origin it would be as necessary to infer an unmoved motive force as it is in the argument we have just considered.

To sum up. Since motion exists and it is

necessary to account for it, and since every body that is moved is moved by some other thing; therefore, either this being is immovable;[1] or, if it forms part of a series, that series must end in a being or motive power entirely immovable. This motive power we call God.

[1] "Not for increase to Himself
Of good, *which may not be increased,* but forth
To manifest His glory by its beams,
Inhabiting His own eternity,
Beyond time's limit or what bound soe'er
To circumscribe His being, as He willed
Into new natures, like unto Himself
Eternal Love unfolded. Nor before
As if in dull inaction torpid lay
For not in process of *before* and *aft*
Upon these waters moved the spirit of God."
—Dante, *Paradise,* Canto XXIX. (Cary's Translation).

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST CAUSE

"The most agreeable reflection which it is possible for human imagination to suggest is that of genuine Theism, which represents us as the workmanship of a Being perfectly good, wise, and powerful, who created us for happiness." [1]

From a consideration of the causes which we recognise at work around us, and the relations of effect to cause, we are bound to conclude that there is an absolutely first and necessary cause to which the origin of all existing things such as we know is to be traced. This absolutely first efficient cause we call God.

I must remind my readers here of the investigations which we made in Chapter II. of the conditions required to produce any change or effect whatever, and of the four causes which we then discovered. It will be useful to enumerate these causes again briefly. They are the material (the thing which is affected by the change), the formal (the newly-induced state or manner of being,

[1] Hume: *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion.*

which, as we noted before in substantial changes, is of the essence of the changed being), the final (the reason which prompted, actually or metaphorically, the change), and the efficient (the motive power to which we ascribe the bringing about of the change). It is with this latter—the efficient cause—that this chapter has to do.

As examples, we may take familiar changes of state, such as the boiling of water, or the printing of a newspaper. The efficient cause of the boiling of the water is the heat of the fire, which is communicated to it. Rise in temperature and the consequent change of state ensues. In the printing of a paper, the immediate efficient cause are the actual movements of the press; but these are caused by the belt and pulley, which only move in virtue of the engine actually working. Ultimately, in such a series of efficient causes, we reach the fire which provides the steam to work the pistons of the engine. There is no change of any kind for which some efficient cause is not necessary. It may be that we are not always prepared to assign one for any given effect; but we are none the less persuaded that one necessarily exists. Natural scientific investigation acquaints us with efficient cause (and, be it noted, science generally speaks of this as the only cause) in transformations only; for natural science deals

with material and existing bodies and their qualities as its objects. Moreover, even modern science, no less than ancient philosophy, proclaims unceasingly the absolute validity of the causal inference. On a supposition of the infallible succession of effect to cause all science is based: and this basis once destroyed or called in question, all the proud certainty of science at once vanishes.[1]

Nature of Efficient Cause

But if we attempt to understand the precise nature of efficient cause, we shall find no particular reason for so limiting it. The effect produced by the co-operation of all four classes of cause depends uniquely upon it—efficient = effect. It is precisely the efficient cause, because it produces the effect; that is, on account of its relation to the new state induced, and not by reason of any real or supposed relation to the pre-existing state, or pre-existing material cause. That which is an efficient cause is conceivable as existing as a being or entity, without any effect. The tree exists before it bears fruit. And we can quite well conceive this cause, in as far as it is considered essentially as efficient, acting not by inducing new forms (transformation of formal causes) in already existing matter, but by producing its effect, materially and formally

[1] Cf. *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, vol. ii., p. 200, for a striking statement of this scientific assertion.

complete, from nothing of itself or of its object. In other words, a creative idea is not excluded from that of the efficient cause.[1]

Let us see if our reason will rest satisfied with anything short of a unique and absolutely primary efficient cause. In the first place, as we have seen, we are unable to divorce the idea of effect from that of cause. Given the effect, an efficient cause is immediately presupposed. But are we wrong here? Is it possible that no such relationship as that of effect to cause exists—that all is a mere relationship of succession in time, depending in no wise upon what we conceive of as causative power.

We are able, of course, and quite free to deny causality. But we do it at the risk of denying our reason at the same time. We can quite well, if we wish, close our eyes to the light of day and persuade ourselves that we are plunged in impenetrable darkness. We are free to destroy our organs of sight, if we will, and then set about trying to persuade others that there is no such thing as light. And it is thus that we are able to deny causality.

Not only do we see it in constant operation around us; we perceive it in ourselves. We are conscious of the causal nature of every voluntary

[1] Cf. *Arist. Met.*, L. XII., c. 5.

action that we perform, and we are even prepared to point to the causes of those actions which we classify as involuntary. To deny causality is to destroy all the fabric of knowledge that science has laboured so to build. Chemistry, mechanics, biology, alike become no more than a meaningless jargon when the principle of causality is called in question. What profits it the chemist to analyse and observe, if he can never ascertain the presence that causes the precipitate in his test tube? Science is defined — and it needs only a brief reflection to understand with what justice — as the knowledge of causes. It is, or attempts to be, the classification of facts, the reduction of individual facts and experiences into groups. The most perfect science explains the many and heterogeneous by pointing to the few and similar.

Destroy, oppose, deny causality and there is no science possible, no knowledge trustworthy. But there is no danger that the human race will submit to such a wholesale destruction of the very possibility of knowledge. That mankind should give up what it has ever held to be among certain things the most certain, requires more than the laboured considerations offered by philosophers who appear to be dissatisfied with the naturalness of reason. No wonder the name of philosophy has

been brought into disrepute, and no wonder its saner teachings have been suspected, when doctrines such as these are paraded as philosophy; when philosophical terms, the fruits of years of patient toil and study, are distorted and disfigured in such fashion that they are made to serve the purposes of untruth.

Let me point out here and now that we are always bound to distrust any teaching, no matter how high-sounding, no matter whose great name lends colour to it, no matter how great a passing vogue it obtains, if it contradicts what seems to us most certain, if it runs counter to the common-sense of mankind. All our science is helplessly wrecked, all our knowledge destroyed, our every thought and action thrown out of gear and rendered absolutely worthless, if we once call the truth of the idea of efficient causality into question. And remark, too, that though we may succeed in persuading ourselves that the causal relation does not exist in nature, we still must hold the necessary regularity of succession. In other words, we have succeeded in changing our *terms* in attempting to explain the essence of the causal relation, but we have by no means rid ourselves of the idea that the relation is both a constant and a true one.

But can we *prove* its truth? Can we demon-

strate the inseparable and necessary link that exists between effect and cause? Anyone who would seriously ask these questions shows how little he understands the point at issue. It is as vain to ask for proof of a first principle as to demand a demonstration of our own individual existence. I cannot prove that I exist. I am unable to demonstrate that the whole is greater than the part. I have absolutely no argument to advance that two and two make four. The geometer cannot prove that things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. The chemist cannot demonstrate that the substances which he weighs and examines and analyses have any real and essential nature. And are we therefore to destroy at one blow all—chemistry, geometry, and personal existence alike? It is a vicious twist of the mind to ask that everything should be proved; and its fulfilment is utterly impossible. Whatever is proved is proved by assuming some other truth. And at length we must come to truths that rest on nothing anterior to themselves, to truths that are of themselves so certain and so obvious that to call them in question is to commit intellectual suicide.

Efficient Causality

The principle of efficient causality is, then, well established—so well established that it is impossible to doubt it; and it rests upon the very strongest possible grounds to compel our assent to it. It is

obvious. But—and here we come to what looks like a contradiction—it is inseparably bound up with the idea of an uncaused being: a being that is *not* an effect, a being or efficient cause upon which all other causes and all effects depend.

Let us examine this idea. Everything that we know or perceive is an effect. It may also be a cause; but we are so persuaded that it is in reality an effect that we invariably—as, perhaps more methodically, do all scientists—search for its cause, if we do not already know it.

Perhaps the whole universe is not an effect? Let us consider a moment. The universe is ever changing, in position, in characteristics, in relationships. Take this world as an example. Geology tells us that it never remains the same. Astronomy teaches us that it is whirling through space. Geography warns us that where now the solid earth forms islands or continents to-morrow the ocean may lift its troubled waves, and bids us notice that where yesterday the tides ebbed and flowed to-day the land is fertile and inhabited by man.

What brought about the change? Time? Obviously not: but forces that work in time. The force, then, is the cause of the change. The latter is but the effect of the former. And so we reason on and on from effect to cause, and then from this,

considered anew as effect, to further cause. We must stop somewhere. An actual infinity is as impossible as it is unthinkable. The hands of a clock tell the time: but they are moved by a cog-wheel. Passing over the various wheels we reach the main-spring. This is of steel, fashioned and tempered by man. We perceive the beginning of a new series. The man had a father, a grandfather. We ask for centuries of time—but at last we reach the first man. Was he, then, directly created by the first cause? That is not here a question to the point. Let us suppose he was evolved from the monkey. Trace the supposed series of his causes through the animal and the vegetable world. We touch upon the origin of life. But on! We must not stop here. Dead matter compounded of the simple forms must enter this supposed genealogy. And whence the simple forms? One after another from the moving hands that measure the lapse of time, wheels, spring, and watchmaker: father, grandfather, and great-grandfather; ape and beast and plant; inert mixture of lifeless matter, simple element and, if we will, the one element from which this seemingly endless procession starts—all cry out with one voice for a cause not caused, all demand at last a creative power somewhere, even if for the moment we suppose that it only acted once. Grant the hypothesis of evolution—it does

not signify here whether or not it is true—and the original ether (to borrow a catchword from modern writers) is as loud in its cry for a cause as the finished clock ticking upon the mantel-shelf. From no matter what point of view we choose to look, the causal linking together of all nature is apparent —invincibly, irrevocably apparent. We can break off the individual series, the causes and effects in any one order, but only to take up the chain again in a new one. And go on as we will, we find the path of our inquiry fixed between ever narrowing walls, until at last, somewhere or other in this series of series, we are forced to admit the existence of an uncaused cause; a cause bearing no relation of effect to any other thing; something sufficient in itself to account not only for its own existence, but to render an account as well for all other existing things.

We see at a glance the terrible mystery of this uneffected cause. Our human minds have indeed lost their reckoning here. But our human reason —and it is the only guide we have after all in a purely rational search for the reasons of things —absolutely compels us to admit that such must indeed exist.

For if, *per impossibile*, a first efficient and immovable cause be denied, we at once have an insuperable difficulty to consider. We perceive a

great number of causal series in which the last effect depends upon the first cause of its series working through intermediate effect-causes. But, as we have seen, the first cause of the series is the last effect of some other series, and so on. In the impossible supposition just mentioned, the whole universe with all its contents would consist of innumerable series of effect-causes each acting by derived virtue. If anywhere along this chain in its process of formation one link be dropped the preceding one must be the last—the true end of the chain. And reason demands, in working backward thus, that the first link, if the chain is to be accounted for at all, depends on something, not a link, but capable of supporting the whole. That is to say, that somewhere or other a cause must be acting by its own and not by any derived virtue or power. The difficulty is the same, to continue the metaphor, at any given link. Or, to borrow the old illustration, continue backwards a hundred million years, and the egg, or the chicken, difficulty is no nearer its solution. And that is because there is only one way of solving it, as easy to apply in thinkable as in unthinkable periods of time.

There is one other point worth considering. Whether we take it that we are warranted in supposing that all the series of cause and effect may be ultimately reduced to one of which they

are all component parts; or whether we hold that they are separate and, like many chains, hang from many nails; we have only to proceed one step further back to attain the unity of the first efficient cause. Metaphors, as a rule, are dangerous to use. And to say that the nails are all driven into the same substance hardly helps our thought. But in this case there is the maker of the nail and of the substance, the arm that drove them in. Think a new series. Begin the causal chain again. The solution of the difficulty is as near and as far away as ever. And lastly, if we wish to keep our reason, the conclusion forces itself home upon our minds with irresistible force. It is a necessary inference. There is a first efficient cause, dependent on none other, in itself sufficient and accounting for all else. This first efficient cause we call God.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CREATOR OF LIFE

"No mortal has ever seen the process of *generatio æquivoca*; and every one who has maintained that he has, has been contradicted not by theologians, but by scientists." [1]

Living Beings

THE existence of living beings in the world of our sense-experience, no less than the existence of inanimate things, calls for some explanation. Passing over for the moment the question as to the possibility of higher types of life being evolved, either by an active interference on the part of some external cause, or by the blind power of natural selection, we may reasonably ask whence life came at all, and to what cause its origin is to be assigned. The reader will have already grasped the fact that this consideration is in a sense the same as that of the last chapter. We are still searching for the efficient cause of things; but here we seek for one which will account for a particular class of effects; those, namely, that exhibit the operations and perform the functions of living beings. Our line of thought will be found

[1] Wirchow *at Munich*, 1877.

to lead us to a unique living being, incorruptible and unproduced. This incorruptible and original living being we call God.

We have already seen that a first efficient cause is postulated by the mere existence of things. Inasmuch, then, as a living being is a being, it requires an efficient cause: and, whether this efficient cause operates immediately or through other causes in the production of the living being, ultimately a first efficient cause is required as well. Now in all the causes and effects that fall under our observation we notice that several constant truths obtain. Three of these may, for convenience, be stated in the form of axioms.

Axiom I. *The effect requires a proportionate cause.*[1] That is to say, that although the cause may far exceed the effect in its power or its nature, still the contrary proposition can never be true. The effect cannot be superior to its cause either in power or in nature. It may be naturally similar to it and equivalent to it; but the perfection of the cause can never be naturally less than that of the effect.

Axiom II. A second axiom consists in this that *the essential perfection of the effect pre-exists in the cause.* This

[1] *Example of Axiom I.*—The designing of a watch or the procreation of a human being cannot be attributed to a brute or to a plant.

must be understood of perfections only, and not with regard to defects. The latter may arise from some intrinsic condition of the effect or by reason of some interference on the part of another cause or causes. And it is only generally true when it is asserted of the principal cause upon which the effect depends.[1]

A third axiom has to do with effect-causes. Axiom III. *To that cause which produces any effect, which in turn becomes a cause of some other effect, is to be attributed the causality of the last effect produced.* This must be understood as applying only to formal series of causes and effects in which the action of each goes towards the ultimate effect induced. These axioms need no proof. They are self-evident: and their purport can generally be grasped at once by the aid of the examples given.

The argument that the presence in the world

[1] *Example of Axiom II.*—(1) The perfection of the human species resulting in the son, is found in the father. (Univocal cause.)

(2) The perfection of warmth in the sun resulting in the generation of seeds. There is nothing specific shared in common by the cause and effect, which only communicates in a wildly differing generic sense. (Equivocal.)

(3) The perfection of an extra generic cause, such as we shall see later on to be God, exists in its effect, inasmuch as both cause and effect agree in this, that each exists; but the perfection of the effect is so different and remote from that of its cause, that they only agree in a double proportion. This

of living beings of varying degrees and grades of perfection presupposes and requires the existence of a living being as the ultimate first cause to which the origin of all can be traced is a conclusive one. This first cause cannot be other than one possessing all the perfections of all actually living beings; and therefore it cannot be of the limited nature of any one particular class of them. And, as we know by experience that in univocal causes each one acts towards the production of a being similar in species to itself, we must turn either to an equivocal or to an analogical cause when we seek for that one to which all living beings owe their origin. But, again, no equivocal cause known to us does or can suffice to produce all the effects which we class together as living beings: and hence the analogical alone remains as the only cause to which so many and so varied perfections can be assigned.

One of the greatest attempts of modern science

expression, borrowed from mathematics, is extended in philosophy to include more than the mere relationship of numbers; so that, as we say 2 : 3 :: 4 : 6, so we assert the perfection of the effect is to its nature as the perfection of the analogical cause is to its essence or nature.

Example of Axiom III.—The man who wields the hammer is the cause of nail entering wood. To the causal action of the fire is to be attributed the effect of the incandescence of the filament in the electric lamp. The action of the combination causing in turn the various transformations of energy resulting (to stop at that point) in the final glowing of the filament.

has been to account for the origin of life and the differentiation of living beings in species, or higher and lower grades, by a popular form of the theory of evolution. This theory in itself is by no means a new one; but the modern use to which it has been popularly and vulgarly put so severs it in its scope and meaning from its original form that one is obliged both to call it a recent theory and to deny the claim it is so careful to put forward of being scientific.[1]

Evolution

And here in a few lines we may touch upon the controversy of evolution. This theory has been so long and so insistently before the public that it has come to be looked upon as quite a commonplace of science. It has been advanced in varying stages of completeness. It has been seized upon by the popular mind and applied in a fashion altogether out of keeping with the intention of those who originally framed it. To some extent the theory of evolution, as a scientific hypothesis, is possible. Admitted with caution and within certain limitations, it is doubtless true. But as it is popularly held, there is little, if anything, in the way of fact, experiment, or experience, to justify the enormous assumptions upon which it rests. Even in its

[1] Science is the knowledge of things by, or as related to, their causes. Properly speaking, we do not know anything until we have exhausted the causes to which its essence is to be attributed.

most strictly scientific form, it leaves very much to be desired; nor does it even rise above the dignity of being an hypothesis. In any case, granting its claim to the fullest extent, it would not militate in any way against or disprove the existence of a creator. It would explain His action, or profess to explain it, in a new terminology. Still, it so needlessly and so groundlessly shifts the creative action from individual species, to a being endowed with a potentiality of evolving into all and every species, that it will not be a waste of time to investigate it more fully and see the worth of the basis upon which it claims to rest.

One of the strongest arguments against this hypothesis is that it has never been, and apparently never will be, proved. And it requires proof, since it is admittedly not in itself evident. Indeed all the observations made by scientists tell directly or indirectly against the brief for evolution. The supposed argument in its favour drawn from geological formations is now being abandoned as a paradox; and even if geological facts in reality corresponded to the ideal theory of the evolution of type from type, they would prove no more than a chronological succession, certainly not that the lower forms of life were necessarily prior links in the causal chain which reaches its perfection—as far as the type has already become evolved—in man.

The generation of hybrids, either plants or animals, breaks down hopelessly when advanced as a convincing proof of the evolutionistic theory. Hybrids do not form a new species: but a new family in a closely related genus. Nor can they be procreated at all by parents belonging to different genera. They are generally infecund, at any rate in the animal kingdom: and if occasionally they do breed, the offspring reverts to one or other of the original types. On the other hand, variations, such as those which artificial culture produces, always belong to their original species. In plants and fruits, artificial selection has long been recognised and employed as a means of improvement. By its aid new and improved flowers and fruits are produced. Still, not only has artificial selection signally failed to produce a new and permanent species, but it furnishes the strongest grounds for believing that such a production would be both artificially and naturally impossible. It improves, it strengthens the weak, it procures new colours and shapes in flowers, new flavours in fruits, it develops new beauty and grace in animals, new intellectual and moral power in man. But as far as observation goes it has never done and cannot do more than this. It can never make a new species, or cause a plant or animal belonging to any one to evolve into any other. On the contrary, left to nature, all the

effects of artificial selection are quickly reduced to their primitive state. The garden becomes tangled with noxious weeds, the progeny of the trained animal degenerates to the ordinary level from which it originally sprang.

A stronger consideration here is the purely philosophical one. No living being of a higher generic or specific type can evolve itself from a lower type.[1] This assertion depends upon the axioms of causality already given. For no agent or cause generically or specifically different from, and lower than, an effect can produce that effect. And, since vegetables compared with sensitive beings, and these again compared with rational beings, are generically and specifically different and lower, they cannot in themselves be suitable efficient causes for the production of the required effects. That a creator could from a specifically lower type produce a higher is not denied. But we have no real warrant for framing an hypothesis that He has done so. This is not the question at issue. The problem is not one of theology but of science and philosophy. What is asserted is that, in virtue of the axiom, the active causality of the lower, even if this be itself produced by a creator, is naturally insufficient to produce a higher type.

Moreover, one of the strongest principles uni-

[1] The perfection of the effect pre-exists in the cause.

formly observed in nature is that of inertia, or the passive resistance of natural beings to all contrary influences. Inanimate nature is thus, to some extent at least, preserved from the dissolution which, even as it is, gradually overcomes it. By this principle, united in the higher forms of nature with active principles of self-preservation, plants and animals not only develop those qualities which fit them for sturdy existence in any given environment; but, in the case of the latter at least, they positively and actively resist any cause which threatens harm to their being. The man, leaving a comfortable home for the lumber camp or the frozen Yukon, slowly, perhaps, but surely develops those qualities of strength and endurance which go to fit him for the circumstances of his new environment and life. The race reared under conditions such as these is sturdier and hardier than its parents: but it is still a race of men. With regard to this question careful attention should be paid to the following principle. The natural inclination in any living being—nature, instinct, or reason, according to the grade of life under consideration—is, in common with the tendency of all created things, to preserve its own nature inviolable. Hence, unless all distinctions of species and of nature are to be swept away, it is contrary to the vital principle of living beings, no less than to the principle of self-

conservation in all things, to suppose as possible a successive transformation, or evolution, from species to species. On the other hand, presuming the truth of such an evolution, we should be bound to confess that any apparent difference between man, say, and the oyster was purely accidental; that man and the mollusc are specifically the same; and that, granted only a sufficiently long period of time, there is no reason why the descendent of the bivalve at present lying in the depth of the sea should not become reasonable beings such as we ourselves are. If there is a generic or a specific difference between plant and animal, animal and man, it is in flat contradiction to the principle given above, which upon consideration will be seen to be indisputable, to suppose that one could at any time or under any circumstances, short of miraculous, be evolved from the other. And to invoke miracle here is worse than to assent to specific creation. Such evolution would involve the destruction of the real nature of the being in which it operated. It would be opposed to the essence of all natural inclination towards self-preservation.

The Philosophical Evolution

Utterly opposed to an evolutionary hypothesis of this unscientific nature is that which recognises an evolution of qualities and perfections within the limits of the species. This theory, unlike the former, finds a real support in every observation

made of nature. By a true natural selection of fitting representatives nature provides, not for the destruction of a species by transforming it into some other, but for the perfecting of that identical species. By competition, the struggle for existence, and kindred high-sounding theories, nothing more is actually proved, or can be reasonably inferred, than this—except as an occasional example of devolution, a falling away from the primitive type in point of quality or perfection, or the local extinction of an entire species.

It is important to remember that this criticism is not aimed at science itself, but at a peculiar form of philosophy which is speciously put forward in the name of science, and which claims to be scientific both on account of the facts of science on which it is based and the method which it pursues. This form of philosophy is unscientific, for it arbitrarily limits its consideration to that of one particular species of cause—the material. It is unphilosophical, for it violates the first canon of philosophy —to examine the natures of things as they really are. It is raised upon a slender foundation—an hypothesis that has never been proved to be in accordance with fact: and it falls foul, at any rate, in the popular form in which it is generally stated, of several fundamental principles of knowledge.

These considerations seem to point very directly to an intelligent and a living efficient cause, which operates, not once only in giving an original impulse to creation, but continually and all through the graded course of nature. In any supposition that such a cause acted once only in giving, at any point, the original impetus to a system of evolution, we must attribute to that cause all that is to be found in the sum total of its effects. This is a position held, and a doctrine asserted, by not a few popular writers who seek to concord the evolutionistic theory with their belief—I use the term advisedly—in a God. But, as we have seen, the hypothesis of evolution is by no means so certain as is popularly supposed. Whereas there is little to be advanced in its support, there is much to be said against it. And, therefore, if it is not a positive statement of fact, an individual causal activity is postulated by every specifically different class of beings in the universe. Consequently, from each and every species a cause proportionate to the nature produced can and must be inferred. Philosophy has nothing to say for or against a simultaneous or a successive production of all these effects. Science and scientific observation seem quite sufficient to point to a successive and advancing creative series. But the fact remains that each and every series postulates a sufficient

reason and an adequate cause. And this consideration in reality differentiates the present argument from that of the first efficient cause.

That this cause exists we have seen in Chapter VII. That it is living and intelligent may be fairly held to have been shown in the preceding paragraphs. And to this living and intelligent first efficient cause we give the name God.

CHAPTER IX

THE AUTHOR OF HARMONY AND DESIGN

"The exquisite structure of the sun, the planets, and the comets could not have had its origin but by the plan and absolute dominion of an intelligent and powerful being." [1]

THE admirable arrangement and harmony of the visible universe, no less than the obvious adaptation of all its parts considered in relation to the whole, together with the laws and principles that direct the intellectual and moral judgements of man, demonstrate the existence of an intellectual and designing cause ruling and directing all things to their proper ends. This intellectual author of design and finality in the universe we call God.

In this chapter three assertions require to be made good. We must show the harmony and arrangement in nature; we must point out the adaptation of parts to the whole; and we must see how the moral and reasoning nature of man necessarily presupposes an intelligent author of design. But first it will be well to recall the

[1] Newton: *Phil. Nat. Princip. Math.*

typical change of state considered in Chapter II. One of the causes operating in every change was there seen to be a final cause; or, in other words, the finished action, considered as the reason why the change of state was brought about. In the various operations of nature this cause is always present, although we may not always be able to recognise it. So true is this observation that even in the rarer cases of what we sometimes call chance in nature, real ends must be assigned to the several causes working together to produce the chance effect. All nature tends naturally to its end. There is a reason for everything: an answer, whether we know it or not, to every Why? To make this quite clear, we must draw a broad distinction between the methods or ways in which different classes of beings tend towards their respective ends. Man, for example, acts in a very different manner from the falling stone or the time-recording clock or the instinct led animal. Intelligent beings determine what effects they desire to produce and act so as to produce them. Natural and artificial agents produce their effect blindly and regularly in virtue of their nature, if they are not interfered with by other agents. They receive their impulse towards their respective ends from the same source as that to which their nature is due. And the impulse is steady and constant.

Final Cause

It is ruled as much by finality as the actions of intelligent man, who tends towards the acquisition or production of a contemplated effect, swayed in his selection of ways and means by the very uncertainty of the instruments at his disposal. Whether we consider the universe as a whole, or whether we consider only some particular part of it, we are struck by the harmony and balance manifested in it. The courses of the planets and the laws of motion to which they are subject, the revolution upon its axis of this world of ours, the succession of the seasons, each has its purpose and reason for being as it is. Any natural law, as that of gravity, for example, gives a flat contradiction to those who would attempt to deny the purposive finality of nature.

It is hardly necessary to point out to the reader the manifest finality apparent in the vital operations of plants and animals. If, instead of giving an altogether undue weight to the few supposed and apparent exceptions, people would only examine the enormous number of cases that come under their daily observation, they would realise that the law of finality is one that is, perhaps, furnished with more palpable and striking examples than any other. In the few cases in which an organ or a being seems to have no purpose in life, no definite work to do, or no precise end to attain, it is far

more reasonable to put down the apparent defect to our own lack of knowledge than to any real aimless or purposeless sport on the part of nature. That lack of knowledge has been responsible for mistakes of this kind is certain. It was at one time supposed that the thyroid gland had no purpose to serve in the economy of the body. Only after having acted upon their supposition by removing it did physicians discover that they had made a mistake. Perhaps the most striking examples of the principle of finality which we are examining are to be found in the animal kingdom. The web of the spider, the structure of the hive, the nest of the swallow—to select these from an almost infinite number of examples, show us not only that a very definite end is to be attained, but also that animals incapable of perceiving and understanding for themselves any finality in the universe, and unable to investigate, choose, or vary the means to the end which are at their disposal, still work similarly towards the end planned for them by the author of nature and instinctively play their part in the finality of the whole.

Finality in the Intellectual and Moral Faculties

A little more difficult to realise is this same principle in operation in the moral and intellectual faculties of man. Up to a certain point the human being is free to choose whatever means to attain his end seem the best to him. A great many of

his judgements and opinions, either practical or theoretical, he forms more or less accurately for himself. But he is not free to accept or reject the great underlying principles either of his reason or of his will. The whole organism of man, well termed a microcosm or little world, sums up and reflects anew the purposive finality observed in the lower forms of nature. Man possesses characteristics in common with inanimate things. He shares with the vegetable kingdom the functions of assimilation, nourishment, and growth. His senses are a higher form of those of the lower animals, serve him in the same way, and for the same reasons. But all these characteristics and qualities take on a new meaning when they are united to the intellectual principle in man. Their end is seen to be not merely the bringing about of a power of resistance to preserve the individual from exterior destructive forces; not merely a perpetual renewing of structural tissue in order to counteract organic decay; not merely to assist in his preservation by announcing to him and estimating for him what is useful and what is harmful. In man these faculties have a higher purpose, and are made to serve a more worthy and noble end. Through them and by them he lives the life of reason. He possesses them in order that he may acquire knowledge: and the first and perpetual question

that he puts to all things, his searching Why? shows that this end is ever present to his mind. Man is able to perceive in his own actions and thoughts a reflection of that working towards ends with which he credits and attempts to explain the whole of nature. In this perception he realises how it is that nature, like himself, can be frustrated in its tendency by the intervention of disturbing elements. He sees how defects are possible, and how the action of one cause can interfere with that of another. But he does not, on that account, for one instant relinquish his hold upon the principle of finality. And when, among all the principles that he possesses, he discovers that some are so constituted in his mind that he is unable to use them arbitrarily towards his own proposed ends, but is obliged to employ them in one particular fashion, he perceives that there is some more general and universal purpose in his intellectual and moral life, designed not by himself but by some other intellectual being for whom he, with all the rest of creation, exists as ordered and shaped towards definite and established ends. This he must realise if he reflects at all.

What are known as the first principles of reason are not under his control. The expression within him of the moral law of nature, of which even the most abandoned feel the force and truth, has also

a purpose to achieve and an end to attain. And in the light of these first principles of knowledge and these first dictates of natural law, we are able to read something of the end for which we ourselves are made. We are unable to get away from either the one or the other set of principles, speculative and moral or practical, which we find within us. We are free to abuse the one and disobey the other: but they remain none the less, the light of the one shining upon the whole system of our knowledge, the dictates of the other applying to the entire sum of our actions.

If, then, we ask whence comes this disposition seen in the whole of nature; whence and why the observed laws, such as those of gravity, of motion, of chemical affinity; whence the plan upon which vegetable and animal structures are built up, and to what purpose each tends, regularly and systematically, to the production of its own proper and unique effects; whence the power of choice and the selection of means to proposed ends in the case of reasoning beings; and whence, above all, the fixed laws not under man's control that regulate the use of reason, and the fixed principles that guide the tendencies of the will:—we must inevitably come to the conclusion that there is a final cause for all this, arranging, ordering, disposing, and

moving towards definite fixed and pre-established ends.

And this cause to which the whole arrangement and order of the universe, the disposition and adaptation of parts towards the unity and well-being of the whole, the promulgation of intellectual and moral law for the guidance of free reasoning beings, is to be ascribed, we call God.

This same argument may be put very briefly in another form. Everyone is acquainted with the inference drawn from the watch found upon the heath. It is a good argument and a valid one, although the fashion has been to minimise its force. That the intricate parts of a mechanism such as a watch should have "happened" and fitted themselves together by chance is as unthinkable when examined by reason, as it is contrary to the immediate judgement of common-sense. But the world or universe with the sum total of its contents is not a watch. Multiply the example a thousandfold and add to it all kinds of other mechanisms, you have not yet reached the sum total of design in nature. The structure of a single blade of grass is as wonderful and shows a greater amount of design than the watch. Each particular fruit, with its form, colour, taste, and fragrance, succeeding the flower and the bud, the leaves, the stems and branches, the trunk and root of the tree—all born

The "Watch" Argument

and growing from one tiny seed, itself produced from a parent plant—show a far more wonderfully adapted purposiveness than the most intricate artificial machine. Still more astounding is the finality of parts in animals, and, as we have already seen, in their actions. Look where we will and when we will, design is written large upon every being in nature: and, with our knowledge of ourselves and the arbitrary nature of our intellectual and moral first principles, our theoretical truths that are seen immediately and necessarily, and the practical dictates of our reason when contemplating the performing or omitting of an action, we must perforce conclude that there is indeed a designer, intellectual because designing and imposing principles upon intellect, moral because of the moral dictates likewise designed and imposed; or else we must confess to an utter chaos in the whole of nature, an utter incomprehensibility in all the conceptions of our minds.

This latter alternative, of course, would at once throw us back upon a new subject for consideration; upon which I do not propose to enter here. It is the vexed nature of theory striving to relate together mind and matter. But it is to be noticed that the very existence of theory upon the relation of things external to the thinking mind, in no matter what form it happens to take, necessarily presupposes

some such relation. Its very data are mind and matter; and the very relationship it seeks to establish or to disprove is tacitly presupposed in its every consideration. With this subject, as has already been said, we have here nothing to do. A relationship exists, no matter in what form theory may be able to present it best. For us, the exterior world does exist as over against our sensations and the world of our thoughts. It is a primitive fact, no matter what explanation we give to it, or upon what lines we develop it. And in the contents of this fact are to be perceived, first in mind and then in matter, the multitudinous relationships of finality. We can only destroy them theoretically by having resort to palpable absurdities, or by destroying at the same time our power of reason. And consequently, viewing all this order, regularity, and arrangement to ends in nature as a fact, and ignoring for the moment all theories professing to explain it or relate it to our thought, viewing also the same order, regularity, and arrangement in the world of our intelligence as a fact, we necessarily obtain the conclusion that there does indeed exist a designing cause of both the series; a designing cause not necessitated to explain any supposed harmony between the two, but to account reasonably for the existence of either. In other words, we infer by necessity the existence of God as the cause

Relationship between the World and Thought

of order in nature; and, by a parallel necessity, we infer Him as the cause of order and finality in the operations of our own minds.

CHAPTER X

THE PERFECTION OF BEING

"Now the things that are seen are temporal: of things that are unseen Science knows nothing, and has at present no means of knowing anything." [1]

"Those things that are most true, possess the most of being." [2]

FROM an inspection of the grades in which the various beings composing the world are apparently placed and from an investigation of the degree or intensity in which they share the perfections found in nature, we necessarily infer the existence of a being which is the cause of all perfection, of all goodness, and of all existence. Further, this being is absolutely perfect, absolutely good, and absolutely existent of and by itself. And this being we call God.

Exemplary Cause

It will be necessary, for the full understanding of this line of reasoning, to note a cause other than the four we have already discussed. This is the exemplary cause, and in an intel-

[1] William Osler, M.D., F.R.S.: *Science and Immortality.*

[2] St Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologica.*

lectual agent it is identified with the idea he has of the perfect effect which he intends or wishes to produce. It is the ideal pattern, the archetype idea, to which the effect conforms in a greater or less degree. For example, there is in the mind of the architect an idea of the buildings which he is competent to produce; a sort of picture of the completed edifices, not, like them, each limited to any one particular time or place, not composed of any particular or definite material substance, or narrowed to any definite form or style. Even in this example of a finite and imperfect efficient cause we are able to perceive that the exemplary is much less limited, and consequently far less imperfect, than any one effect which can be produced to its pattern.

In this chapter we have to consider the perfections exhibited in the things with which we are acquainted. These can be easily divided into two classes—those perfections which are of the essence of the being possessing them and those which are possessed, indeed, but not essentially so. For example, there is the essential perfection of manhood, which is common to all, and only to, men. No one man is either more or less of a man than his fellows. This kind of perfection is said to be indivisible, for it is not capable of existing in a greater or less degree in

the various individuals denoted by it. Take anything away from his manhood, and a man ceases to be man. But on the other hand, man can have perfections which do not strictly belong to his nature or essence. And these can and do exist in almost every imaginable degree of intensity. He may be healthy, or musical, or learned; but he may also be more or less healthy, a good or a bad musician, moderately or profoundly learned. For these latter perfections, which cannot be considered as caused by or following from his essential nature, we must look to some other being than that nature as a cause. With regard to the former class, we shall have to push our investigation a little further. The essential perfection we have been considering—manhood—is a phase of life. There are grades of life known to us beneath the level of man; and, though this is not the place to assert that there are, there may be grades of life above that same level.

Life

Life, as we familiarly know it, belongs to plants, and animals, and men. The vital processes, from which our knowledge of life is derived, are immanent. The vital action, that is to say, has its effect within the living being; an effect which is either the assimilation of foreign matter and its incorporation into the being of the vegetable, or the perception of

exterior objects by means of sensations, as exemplified in varying degrees in the lower animals; or, lastly, the intellectual activity which distinguishes man from the brute. These are the three great classes or main divisions into which living beings fall. There are doubtless many further intermediate grades, but the broad classification is sufficient for our purpose here. Thus we perceive that the perfection of life—and the reasoning serves as well in the case of other simple perfections—is shared in a greater or a less degree by the living beings which fall under our observation. We are naturally led to inquire why it is that this perfection, existing as it does in natures so vastly different, is more and more limited as we descend in the scale of living things. There must be something to account for the fact, some limiting principle in each case; for life in itself, as we conceive it by abstraction from living things, has not this curious note of limitation to any one particular form or manifestation. And the same fact is to be observed with respect to any pure perfection such as we know it. Intelligence and being are as limited in the cases that come under our observation as life itself. All seem to tend towards some absolutely perfect form of which our senses can give us no direct

manifestation; and all seem to be limited by a contrary principle belonging in no way to whatever perfection we happen to be considering.

Principles of Argument from Perfection

The principles of the argument, now that we have sketched in the data of perfection, remain to be considered. They are two in number. A perfection is said to be greater or less in proportion as it approaches to or recedes from absolute perfection. Now it is quite clear that no absolute perfection is announced to us by our senses. Still the force and truth of the principle are evident. Otherwise we could conceive of no one being possessing any given perfection in a greater degree than another. Each perfection would actually be, and therefore would also appear to us as, absolute in itself and in no way comparable to any other given perfection. That of the vegetable as a living entity would be absolute, and in its own way, perfect. No comparison could be made between it and the perfection of the animal, likewise considered as a living entity, because there would be no common note of agreement whatever upon which to fasten the distinction. And, as such an incredible doctrine would make havoc with whatever modicum of knowledge we claim to possess in any form, we must assent to the evidence of the principle that perfections existing in a

greater or less intensity are comparable only because they are, in the last analysis, referred to a perfection which is absolute and unlimited.

The second principle teaches that whatever is in the highest degree and absolutely perfect is the cause of all those limited perfections existing in the same order. Here the cause mentioned may be taken to be either the efficient or the exemplary.

If we select the latter and from a consideration of its nature identify it with the former, we shall be obliged to explain a point that will quite naturally arise. How is it that the absolutely perfect and unlimited exemplary perfection can be imitated by beings possessing more or less of the same perfection? The answer that it must thus be limited because of the various receptive capacities of the natures to which it is communicated, though true as far as it goes, is not sufficient; for the further question at once arises—But, since these natures are themselves perfections, how can they be limited?

The following brief outline of the answer to this question, sufficient here for our purpose, may be given. Any perfection is limited and imperfectly possessed by all creatures because these are in no case simple beings. All that acts upon our senses and thus furnishes us with data for

thought is compounded either of quality and that in which the quality is present, or of matter and form, or of essence and existence. These, it is true, are purely intellectual conceptions and highly abstract ones at that, but they are conceptions based upon adequate data and logically inferred from facts. Now the complex or compounded is necessarily limited and finite, and hence cannot receive or support an infinite perfection.

If we require the answer to yet another question, How is it possible that any limited perfection can exist?—we can only make answer: first, that limited perfections do exist as a matter of fact; and, secondly, that in the hypothesis of the first exemplary causing any being or perfection other than itself, this could neither be absolute nor unlimited. For, that there should be two, there would have to be a conceivable, corresponding to some real, difference between them. And such a difference, moreover, would have to consist in a perfection in the one which was lacking in the other. In which case the one lacking the differentiating perfection would not be absolutely and simply perfect.

We are now in a position to state the argument drawn from the varying grades of beings in the universe, taken together, from the lowest to the highest.

The multitudinous beings existing in the universe manifest a difference of degree in the perfections which they exhibit. This difference is to be observed both in those perfections that are not necessarily involved in the nature of the beings and in those other perfections which are essential to them. And, since an actual infinity of simultaneously existing beings is utterly inconceivable, it is a necessity of reason to suppose that some one grade holds the highest place as possessing the perfection of being in the highest degree. But this grade either consists of one single being which is absolutely perfect and unlimited; or it involves the existence of such a being; since, if it is not the supreme perfection of being, it must, according to the first principle, be referred to something higher and more perfect than itself. And this "something higher and more perfect than itself" must be the most perfect and highest, unless we are to go on infinitely, always supposing a higher and more perfect existence as the exemplary cause. Wherefore, since such a supposition is unintelligible, we are obliged to conclude that all the contents of the universe, each considered as sharing in perfections to the full of its own limited capacity, can only be accounted for by the existence of an absolute perfection, unlimited and therefore

The Argument

infinite. And this absolute perfection, which is the perfection of pure existence, we call God.

I have tacitly assumed throughout the course of this line of reasoning that the efficient and the exemplary cause are identical; and therefore, that in arriving at a conclusion which points to an existing infinite perfection as exemplary cause of all things, I have also proved again the existence of an infinite efficient cause. It will be well to make the very intimate connection between the two conceptions of exemplary and efficient cause clear. In the first place, then, if our infinite exemplary cause to which everything in nature is in its degree conformed is not identical with the efficient cause of all things, it must be joined to, or compounded with, it. In other words, both, as well as the two taken together, are finite; and therefore limited, and consequently imperfect. For it is inconceivable for us to think—and I must again insist upon the real value of our thought as the only guide that we possess in our search for truth, and the only criterion of its value—a first efficient cause as acting without some exemplary to which its effects are to be more or less conformed. And if we discover that our reasoning has led us only to an imperfect and limited exemplary, its force must drive us on to that which is neither imperfect nor limited. Consequently, the innate

necessity of reason leads us to identify the two causes absolutely and without reserve.

But further than this, our consideration of nature as effect and as ordered effect has already led us to two conclusions, that of the first efficient and that of the last or final cause. The various lines of reasoning are seen to be converging to a point—the one explanation which makes reason possible and scientific knowledge, in any one and in all of its branches, concordant and true. It has already been pointed out that science is the certain and evident knowledge of things *by and through their causes.* The experimental sciences can only be made concordant in their testimony by reference to a higher plane of thought, to higher and broader principles that include the lower. And these higher principles must, in their turn, be referred to others yet higher and broader, until at length we come to the recognition of one principle, one cause, by which all things are co-ordinated and explained. There is no unity or plan in our knowledge, no consistency or harmony in our science, unless there is a single point somewhere to which it can be referred, unless there is some cause in the understanding of which the whole is harmonised and made consistent with itself. It is true that we may never adequately realise the harmony, because we can never fully know the first cause, but that such

a harmony exists, and exists, moreover, in virtue of a cause which we can never thoroughly comprehend, requires no great effort of our reason to grasp. And thus we are enabled to perceive the great weight of the first consideration that led us to the identification of the most perfect of exemplary causes with the first efficient cause.

A Second Form of the Argument

This same line of thought may be stated in a somewhat similar form, perhaps more strikingly effective, but at the same time more abstract and therefore more elusive to our understanding. There are grades or degrees in truth, and therefore grades or degrees in being. But grades or degrees in truth presuppose the absolutely true identified with the absolutely existent. And this we call God.

The word truth, as employed here, has two significations. It may refer to a statement or proposition as in the case of logical or ideal truth. I may say, for example, "man is a musician," or "man is a rational animal." The first statement is true, not universally but in the particular cases in which man really is a musician. The second is true with regard to man wherever and whenever he exists. But we know that it is not always true with regard to any one being which now is man. For to-morrow, when he is dead, we shall be obliged to say, not "this is," but "this was," man. This leads us to the second signification of the term

truth. A thing or being is said to be true in itself inasmuch as it is comparable to some intellectual conception with which it agrees. This is metaphysical or ontological truth, the truth of being, as opposed to that of mere judgement. It is worthy of notice that this kind of truth does not necessarily follow from a comparison of the being with our conception of it. Our conception may be false. It may be wrongly derived from the being which still remains true in itself because it exists. The being is only comparable to our conceptions because it really exists or is. Hence ontological truth, truth viewed from this metaphysical standpoint, is the same thing as being. It is obvious that neither being nor truth depends upon our conception of it. We are not the possessors of that intellect in reference to which things are said to be true or to exist.

Now what are the inferences that we can draw from this investigation of truth. The first is that all ontological truth is not of the same essential nature, while ideal or logical truth, though always consisting in the adequation or relationship between things as they are and things as they are understood, and therefore, from that point of view, always essentially the same, is valuable only as expressing correctly, in intelligible terms, the various degrees of ontological truth. Secondly, we can infer that this truth as it becomes less complex and more

universal, embraces and includes more and more all other truths inferior to it. Consequently, in this sense at least, the more universal and the more simple the truth the more is it seen to be perfect. Thirdly, it also follows that there is a most perfect truth which includes all others; and this must be in itself absolutely simple, looked upon both from the ontological and the ideal standpoint. This truth, which is identical with its own being, is God.

One other consideration before we leave this interesting point. A modern division of judgements makes them all either synthetical or analytical. A synthetic judgement is one in which the predicate asserted of the subject does not belong to its nature: an analytic judgement is one in which the predicate is necessarily an aspect either in part or in whole of the subject. We have just seen this division developed under different terms, so that it will not be necessary to enlarge again here.

As we ascend the scale of being we find more and more included in our judgement of the nature of the subject. That is to say, our judgements become more analytic and less synthetic. But at the same time they always gain in content. Expressed in these terms, the present argument might be stated thus. The logical judgement

tends always to become purely analytic and yet full of the content that, in a lower stage, it derives from synthesis. Parallel to the judgement, there is the reality which it represents. This tends to become purely simple with a content equivalent to every possible synthesis. Thus, although our reason and judgement are undoubtedly limited, we necessarily infer a being absolutely simple and yet infinitely equivalent to all being. This being is God.[1]

[1] I make no pretence as to the value of this form of argument *as it is here stated*, though I conceive it to be a possible variation of that which is given in greater detail in this chapter. I venture to think that our thoughts do run parallel to external reality; and that the inference of a simply perfect being—which is all that is meant by an absolutely simple being infinitely equivalent—is postulated by thought.

CHAPTER XI

THE LAWGIVER

"Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." [1]

"No system of the universe can dispense with a First Cause, eternal and self-existent: and the First Cause must necessarily be the living God, whose will is the ultimate force and the origin of natural law." [2]

If we take the pains to look closely into our own minds, we are immediately struck with the deeply rooted sense of responsibility with regard to our actions which we find occupying so prominent a place there. And if, to go a step further, we attempt to concord the expression of this feeling of responsibility or duty as it issues in acts with the principle itself, if we seek to discover the relationship existing between its concrete application and its abstract nature, we shall find that it is neither the result of the education of a primitive instinct nor an entirely irrational sentiment. From the existence within us of this strong feeling of

[1] St Augustine: *Confessions.*

[2] Sir J. W. Dawson: *Modern Ideas of Evolution.*

responsibility, this rooted sense of duty, this consciousness of obligation, pervading all our being and colouring all our thoughts and actions, the existence of a being to whom we are each personally responsible is to be directly inferred. From an investigation of the relation of human or moral actions to the abstract sense of obligation and responsibility, we are led to an intellectual power or being whose will is the ultimate and unique cause of exterior and abstract law as well as of this subjective sense or feeling. In other words, from the data of conscience, even when reduced to the lowest average that is shared in common by the whole human race, we necessarily infer the existence of that being whom we call God.

Feeling of Duty or Responsibility

We shall first examine this sense or feeling as it exists solely in ourselves as individuals. Viewed in this light, it is nothing more than an aspect of our reason—a purely subjective feeling which we are conscious of possessing. It has its value and its force for each individual inasmuch and just so far as he personally apprehends it. But there will be no difficulty raised against an assertion that, in some form or other, every human being is conscious of its possession. Its effects in individual cases may be quite contradictory. That has nothing to do with the existence of the feeling. The Greeks burned the bodies of

their dead as the highest token of filial devotion. The Callatians, on the other hand, considered cremation to be in the highest degree wrong, and devoured the bodies of their fathers when they died—a practice that naturally filled the breasts of the Greeks with horror. In either case the feeling was equally strong. The "ought" of the Callatians was similar to that of the Greeks. And hence, though each one of us must apply to his actions the dictates of his own conscience in precisely the same way that he must settle his intellectual problems for himself in the fulness of his own knowledge, the moral principle, the "ought" and "ought not," is common to all men. If I were writing a treatise upon moral philosophy I might go much further than simply asserting this fact. I might point out a whole series of primary moral judgements common to the human race. But here this fact suffices. We share in common with all mankind the sentiment, and we shall see that it is a rational sentiment, of obligation, duty, responsibility.

Whence does this feeling come? How is it to be accounted for? There are only two possible ways of accounting for its intimate presence within us. Either it is the result of reason working upon some sort of intellectual data, or else it is implanted in us by a causative power

other than ourselves. The question is thus resolved into a simple dilemma; and the solution of either of the alternatives, though both, of course, would not be true, would point unhesitatingly to the same original cause.

A third explanation has, it is true, been advanced which professes to account for the moral sense, as it is wrongly called, by supposing it to be primarily an instinct akin to that of the brutes, educated and rendered permanent and imperative by an indefinite series of actions performed either by the individual or by his ancestors. Such actions, this theory goes on to explain, have brought with them consequences of pain or of pleasure: and the indefinite repetition of painful or pleasurable sensations has at length caused the individual to look upon his actions as right or wrong in the precise proportion in which they have, in his own case or in that of a long line of forefathers, been connected with consequences which he desires to attain or to avoid.

First of all, it must be admitted that this theory has a certain amount of truth in it, and therefore we must not pass it over without an examination. But granting for the moment that it is altogether true as far as it goes, it is neither satisfactory nor sufficient because it does not go far enough. If we find an answer to the ques-

tion, Why are certain human actions followed by sensations of pain or of pleasure? we come nearer to the root of the question. We discover that the moral is a part of the natural law, working in the only possible way it could work when applied to free creatures. And to answer the further question, Whence comes this law? we must either turn to designed finality or to the essential natures of moral agents for a reply. In either case we should come back to an argument that has already been considered, a valid mode of reasoning which has led us to God.

But if our individual human reasons, working by rational processes, whether consciously or not, have arrived at this conclusion of personal responsibility, it is one which also bears with it the necessary conclusion of a being towards whom such a responsibility is felt. Nor are there, in an analysis of its nature, any indications which would lead us to suppose that it arises either from a vague and primitive sense of duty to ourselves or to the human race at large. On the contrary, its promptings frequently lead us to perform actions which, viewed from the standpoint of purely temporal well-being, either personal or racial, have a positively contrary effect to that which we would naturally be led to expect in such an hypothesis. The whole

religious history of mankind is coloured with the idea of self-sacrifice, self-inflicted pain, penance, atonement. No less do we see present in it the idea of vicarious sacrifice and expiation. Now here there are two ideas: an obligation of adopting or avoiding certain courses of action, and the persistent consciousness of responsibility or sin after a wrong course of action has been voluntarily entered upon and an evil effect brought about. More than this, even when the effect has not followed the action calculated to produce it, we have the consciousness of wrong-doing in that we have acted in such a way as would naturally have led to evil consequences. And such widespread ideas, so prevalent and so consistent, show how deeply the subjective sense of responsibility, defect in duty, and consequent sin, is rooted in human nature. If facts go to show that, far from being a feeling calculated in every case to ensure the attaining of pleasure or the avoiding of pain, it acts in a diametrically opposite manner and prompts the individual to inflict pain voluntarily upon himself and to avoid pleasures that he could easily have attained, no theory that makes mere pleasure or pain the motive springs of morality can be held to be consistent.

Nor can it logically be held that this feeling of

moral duty is an instinct which prompts us to act for the betterment of the race as a whole. Such a theory would be contrary to our experience and to our knowledge respecting the motives of our actions. And even if it were not so, supposing it were true, we should have to take refuge in the argument from finality to account for it. Moreover, cases are numerous in which we feel the strongest promptings of the moral sense against actions that do not militate against the good of the race or of the individual to anything like the extent of other actions about which we feel no moral constraint whatever. We certainly do not feel any obligation to abstain from calling in a doctor and nurses, who run a great risk of catching the disease and spreading the contagion, when we are suffering from the most terrible complaints—smallpox or diphtheria, for instance,—while on the other hand, we do experience a revulsion of our nature in contemplating and performing actions which are at the same time perfectly natural and in the highest degree conducive to the well-being and upkeep of the race. We have no instincts, employing the word in its proper sense. We have propensities and passions; but they are, or at any rate ought to be, under the control of reason. If the man who cannot control his passions by reason is not a beast, at any rate he acts like one.

Feeling of Duty the Result of an Intellectual Process

And thus we are left with the first alternative mentioned above. Our feeling of obligation, our sense of duty, is the result of an intellectual process, the conclusion of a reasoning upon perceived facts. Our consciousness of having violated that conclusion is our sentiment of sin.

In order that we may perceive the intellectual force of this line of reasoning as opposed to the merely sentimental value it would have if considered only in its moral aspect, the point requires some development. Of course we are able to see at once that such a feeling, even if not then and there justified by reason, would have an important part to play in the moral order; as indeed it has. It is the immediate prompter with regard to our acts. But it rests on a much more firm basis than this. It derives its power from our ideas of right and wrong: and those ideas are not sentiments merely but intellectual judgements. If we ask, Why ought I to avoid this action? there is an obvious reply—Because it is wrong. And if we insist—But why must we avoid wrong actions?—we can only answer, Because our reason forbids them as harmful to us, or as inimical to society, or as unreasonable in themselves. And if we seek further information as to why we ought not to do what is harmful to us or inimical to society or unreasonable, we can only say, Because it is

so. Because we are what we are, because we are constrained by our reason itself to take this view and hold with certainty that wrong is to be avoided. A similar series of questions would lead us to precisely the same conclusion with regard to the moral judgement concerning right doing.

We see the truth of our moral principles immediately. That we can make mistakes as to what particular actions are involved in them is not altogether surprising. And notice how this is just the ordinary way in which reason works. Its first principles are evident: and its conclusions, if correctly drawn from them, are true. But the actual reasoning may be faulty or the principles employed wrongly: and so, as we get further and further away from the originally certain premisses of our argument, we run a greater risk of falling into error and making mistakes. Give a problem to a class of boys, all of whom have the knowledge of the principles upon which its solution depends. Some will solve it correctly, others will leave it half done, some will hand in a wrong answer, and others bring a solution very nearly right but inaccurate in detail. Now this is precisely what happens in the great school of the world, as well in the solving of moral problems as of merely intellectual ones. The principles are correct and some

of the conclusions as well are properly drawn. But we should never be surprised to find a great number of the latter worked out inaccurately and consequently more or less far from the truth. The so-called "moral sense" is too uniformly constant in its essential characteristics to necessitate any theory of origin differing from that of other knowledge, simply because of its accidental variations. And hence it is far more reasonable and natural to suppose that it has been produced, in common with all the knowledge, theoretical and practical, that we possess, by data which we receive originally through the channels of sense-perception. It is quite possible that we have never consciously seized upon these data and reasoned them out to their necessary conclusions. And it may well be noticed that this is not the only case in which we perceive the acquisition of truth brought about by the unconscious working of the intellect. We are not surprised when, at the end of an elaborate chain of reasoning, we come to a conclusion of whose truth we have all along been convinced. And it is not in the slightest degree unreasonable to suppose that the possession of this sense of responsibility, or duty, or obligation, has been acquired in this very ordinary and natural manner. In any case, it exists: and, no matter to what immediate cause we assign its origin, both its explanation and

its justification lead us to the same inevitable conclusion. An intellectual and a moral lawgiver exists to whom we must refer the abstract ideas of right and wrong and the principles of natural moral law as well as the existence of our personal sense of responsibility. And this intellectual and moral lawgiver we call God.

Another Form of the Argument

The argument from the moral sense has been stated in a form somewhat different from the one just given. It has been declared to be the result of the dictates of the practical as opposed to the theoretical reason. Its truth is necessitated by the fact that, without it, human nature will not be constant in following the ruling of the practical judgements of reason. And with it two other truths are necessitated, the liberty of man and rewards and punishments in a future state. But this theory, based upon the same data, relegates the conclusion once more to the purely subjective. We are individually conscious, or we are certain, that there is a God; but we do not know it. Our consciousness and our certainty do not rest upon proof or demonstration. And, unless the existence of God is as immediately known to us as the truth of the proposition that two and two make four or the whole is greater than the part, which no one dreams of asserting, a demonstrative proof of reason is quite legitimately required. The existence

of God for our minds is in the order of truth: that is to say, the proposition "God exists" is either true or false. If, then, it is not immediately evident, it demands positive proof, reached by reasoning from facts. Now the consciousness of responsibility or obligation is a fact, and as such the theoretical reason deals with it. It is the theoretical reason, to use the distinction drawn by the author of this theory, that works upon the data and obtains the conclusion.

The only remaining question is whether these data are a postulate of the practical or a conclusion of the theoretical reason?

And, unless we are prepared to make an exception in this one case, against all reason and precedent, we must admit that it is the latter. Hence we are at liberty to conclude that here again we have found a definite rational explanation of the moral sense as existing in individuals and of the whole moral law conceived of as binding. And if it has for us much in common with the other so-called demonstrative arguments for the existence of God, it points to the fact that we are beginning to appreciate the nature of these proofs. We perceive how they are all bound more or less together in being each a search for the explanation of facts and in each arriving at the same conclusion. They work backwards, as I have already stated,

from effect to cause, not from cause to effect, and hence, though the cause is validly inferred in each case, it is difficult to present it clearly or distinctly to the mind. The arguments employed demonstrate the existence, but not the nature, of the cause for which the search is instituted.

CHAPTER XII

CONFIRMATORY PHYSICAL ARGUMENTS

"Scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of a Creative Power." [1]

"For that truly is, which exists unchangeably." [2]

"I had rather believe all the fables in the legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind." [3]

In this chapter we shall consider very briefly some lines of reasoning which, while they are not in themselves sufficient to prove the existence of God in the same way or with the same force as the arguments already adduced have demonstrated it, yet have no little weight as corroborating those arguments and leading our minds to an extra-mundane being corresponding at least to the popular idea which we have of God.

I. Transformation of Energy

The first argument is based upon the scientific assumption that all forms of energy—motion, electricity, chemical combination, etc.—are accompanied by phenomena which show that such energy is transformed into heat: and that this heat into which all energy is transformed is in such wise diffusive of itself that it tends towards producing an equilibrium of temperature in the entire universe.

[1] Lord Kelvin: *Letter to the Times*, May 4, 1903.

[2] St Augustine: *Confessions*, vii. 11. [3] Bacon: *Essay on Atheism.*

We borrow our data here directly from science and proceed to base upon it a demonstration of an extra-mundane being, not directly known to us, but still inferred by necessity as superior to nature as we are acquainted with it.

Since all forms of physical energy gradually become converted into that form which is known as heat, and since this conversion tends to produce a stable and equable temperature in the whole material universe, we necessarily conclude that such a transformation of energy had a beginning. The principle upon which this conclusion is based depends upon the consideration that, if such transformation of energy had never begun but had been eternally taking place, all other forms of energy would have already become thermic and a stable and equable temperature brought about throughout the material universe. But such an hypothesis is in contradiction to the facts of the case as manifested by the observations of experimental science. Wherefore we are obliged to take refuge in the other alternative that this process of transformation of energy began. Now the truth of this alternative leads us to the necessity of the existence of God: because the matter in which energy is transformed and which tends to become universally equilibrated in temperature, is either to be supposed as itself having a beginning—in which case we call its

originator God—or as being eternally. But even in the false hypothesis that matter is eternal, we have not escaped the necessity of the conclusion. For this eternal matter, in which transformation of energy had a beginning, was utterly unendowed with energy in any form whatever, or else its energies were in a state of perfect equilibrium. Our conclusion as to the beginning of the transformation of all other forms of energy into stable heat necessitates one or other of these alternatives. In either case, however, and no matter which alternative we select as the most probable, the beginning of energy must be accounted for. If our eternal matter lacked it, a cause is required to energise it. If it was in a perfect equilibrium, it would have remained so eternally, unless an extrinsic cause had disturbed that equilibrium and set that process of transformation for which this argument attempts to account going. In any conceivable case, then, we require the existence of an extra-mundane power or being, superior to the universe as we know it and outside that universe, to account for an observed fact which the experimental sciences have recorded as certain and indubitable. This power or being we recognise as God.

II. Effect of Gravity

II. Another striking form of this sort of confirmatory argument can be stated from the data derived from the action of gravity between the

earth and the moon. This, of course, is but a particular case in which the mutual attraction of bodies is observed, and might be extended indefinitely to the whole fabric of the universe with the same force and necessitating the same inferences. One of the most popular and learned of modern astronomers[1] has stated the fact clearly and accurately. In his own words:—"The tides which the moon raises in the earth act as a brake on the rotation of the earth. . . . The rotation of the moon long since succumbed to tidal control, but that was because the moon was comparatively small and the tidal power of the earth was enormous. But this is the opposite case. The earth is large and more massive than the moon, the tides raised by the moon are but small and weak, and the earth has not yet completely succumbed to the tidal action. But the tides are constant, they never for an instant relax the effort to control, and they are gradually tending to render the day and the month coincident, though the progress is a very slow one." Now here, as in the case of all forms of energy tending to become diffused heat, we observe that all forms of motion in the heavenly bodies are insensibly tending towards rest. In the case before us the rotation of the earth is gradually succumbing to

[1] Sir Robert Ball: *The Story of the Heavens*, p. 526.

the tidal action of the moon. We are confronted anew with a similar set of hypotheses, any one of which necessarily leads us to infer the existence of God. Either the matter in which this motion exists was originally stable and in equilibrium or not. In the first supposition, to account for the beginning of its motion, something other than matter is required. In the second, the lack of stability or equilibrium must have been violent and unnatural. For it is inconceivable to think of matter which tends naturally towards a state of rest being naturally in a state of unrest. And if the primordial matter existed in a violent and unnatural state, both a cause for this perturbed balance of forces and the subsequent withdrawal of that cause must be inferred to account for the existing state of the universe. Either the earth was originally revolving on its axis with an actually infinite velocity—which is impossible—or not. But if not, how came it to be revolving at all? And, granting that it revolves naturally, how can that revolution naturally tend to become rest? Neither matter nor motion can of themselves explain the situation, and, to avoid further questioning and detail here, the conclusions of our demonstrative arguments are sufficient to point to the reason and account for the apparent difficulties. Only in the light of a creator, an originator of

motion and a designed end, outside and above the visible universe, whom we call God, the actual facts are accounted for and made possible for thought. It is true we may not understand all because we are able thus to construct the universe in reason as it is in fact. That we can never do while our intellects are what they are. But we can, and to make the observed facts possible and mentally true we must, infer the absolute existence of a causal being, known to us as God.

III. The Life Origin

III. In Chapter VIII. a biological line of reasoning was outlined which led us to the conclusion that a first living and intelligent cause existed. We shall here touch briefly upon another argument drawn from the origin of life. Even if we conceded—which we are not at all prepared to do—the eternity of matter and perpetual motion, we should still be obliged to assert that an extra-mundane cause is necessarily inferred as accounting for the origin of life. For at this point in the evolution of things as they are, even in the opinion of those who advance a contrary hypothesis, a definite change must have taken place between not-living matter gradually becoming evolved as a fit subject to receive or produce the vital principle and actually living matter.

There is no difficulty whatever in the conception that the lowest possible form of living organism,

no matter how imperfect and rudimentary, differs essentially and specifically from the highest conceivable form of not-living matter. This conception is shared by common-sense and philosophy alike: and no amount of so-called reasoning can shake our conviction of its truth. On the other hand, the conclusion of a series of experiments performed by the eminent scientist Pasteur, can leave no doubt in the mind of the most critical as to the truth and exactness of the metaphysical conclusion, formulated in almost precisely the same words, "All life comes from life."

With the ground thus cleared, we may argue as follows. Organic life had a beginning in the material universe. As far as science can teach us anything, it teaches that there was a time when life was not; and now it is. But life could not have its origin in virtue of mere material forces. Therefore that origin is to be assigned to the action of a living being altogether different and extraneous to that matter which it endowed with the various substantial principles of life. Further than this, since a cause must be proportioned to its effects, this living being must possess all the virtue of the principles with which it vivifies matter. That is to say, in other words, it is both intelligent and above the material world. And this intelligent living being above and without the world is God.

Starting with a now exploded theory once seriously maintained—that of the spontaneous origin of life—as a peg upon which to hang a beautiful illustration of this proof derived from the origin of matter, I quote an eminent writer upon the subject. "The plain English of such theories is this:—'Anything you will, only no Creator.' But if there be no Creator all these theories involve self-causation. No germs, or planets, or Bathybios, can save them from absurdity. Bathybios is either created, self-created, or increate, that is eternal. Is it easier to believe an Eternal Bathybios than an Eternal Creator? An eternal slime than an Eternal Intelligence?"[1]

IV. Miracles

IV. A fourth and a striking confirmatory proof can now be adduced. The demonstrations of the existence of God take away any *a priori* contradiction from our conception of what is known as *miracle*. The possibility of miracle follows from any valid demonstration of the existence of God. By miracle is here meant an unusual, unaccustomed, and sensible effect produced supernaturally, either opposed to the ordinary course of nature or at least strikingly and distinctly above and beyond the power of any cause to which its production might seem to be attributable: an effect, moreover, that can of its nature be referred to a cause that is

[1] Cardinal Manning: *Religio Viatoris.*

at the same time intelligent, moral, and otherwise directive of the course of nature. That any divine intervention or interference with the laws by which the course of nature is usually and ordinarily governed is hardly to be expected and that it is even to a great extent improbable no one would for an instant deny. That such intervention is impossible it would be illogical to assert. The will that made those laws can also unmake them, as easily as suspend their action or alter their effect.

Now the historic record of miracles is very strong. It is found in nearly every nation of antiquity, and though we have not always any detailed record of heathen miracles, there must have been some such record that their claim should be so universally allowed. Jewish and Christian records are fuller and more uniform, so we turn at once to them. They reach in an unbroken chain from the time of Moses to that of Christ; from the apostles and the early martyrs to the present day.

I speak of no one definite miracle, of no one particular time, of no one geographical place. But miracles, from such stupendous events as the raising of the dead to life and the moving of mountains to the healing of disease and the multiplication of bread or oil, from the sudden and unnatural cessation of a raging pestilence and the innocuous effect of fire upon the human body, to

effects which may well be produced by ordinary laws, but in the particular circumstances cannot be held to have so been produced, have the continuous witness of an innumerable multitude of individuals. If there were but one recorded miracle, one apparent exception to observed laws, one acknowledged inexplicable fact, we might well demand the utmost rigour of proof before accepting it as true. And, indeed, we do demand the most rigorous historical proof with regard to any and every so-called miracle which we choose to investigate. But with so continuous a testimony, so respectable a body of witnesses, so disinterested the initial claims, and so contrary to the instant and temporal interests of those who advanced them, the argument from miraculous events may well give us pause. Unless we are predisposed, by purely *a priori* reasoning, to discredit any testimony with regard to miracle as impossible—an utterly illogical and unreasonable position to take up—such a concordant mass of testimony as could be adduced must strike us with overwhelming force. We may suppose that we now have a knowledge of the laws of nature far more extended and infinitely more adequate than those upon whose testimony the evidence of any one particular miracle depends. And from this we may infer that even our knowledge is imperfect, that what we might consider miraculous is ex-

plicable on purely natural grounds. But, unless we are prepared to throw overboard our most intimate convictions as to what is natural and what is not, we cannot rationally act in this fashion. And it yet remains to be explained how, to take one from a multitude of instances, the voice of a man can bid the dead arise and a resurrection to life follow so inadequate and so inexplicable a cause. Even if we were disposed to assume, on account of our lack of knowledge of natural causes and their possible effects, that every so-called miracle was capable of explanation, we should still be obliged to admit the existence of a superior and intelligent being or cause which, under the circumstances, brought forth in its activity this unknown force and virtue of natural laws, or counteracted a law we know by the agency of one with which we are unacquainted. And this because the circumstances under which all recorded miracles were performed point to the reasonable nature of their final cause, or end, and the intelligence with which the effect was produced, as a proof or witness of some ethical doctrine or teaching. But we are not obliged to take refuge in any such an hypothesis. If experimental science declares, as indeed it does, that it is yet unacquainted with all the powers and forces of nature, and that of those that are known none are capable of producing certain miraculous effects, a higher

science steps in, and, picking up the thread where the lower relinquishes its hold, philosophy asserts that if the events recorded really took place, many of them were absolutely above the power of natural forces of any kind; some, while absolutely speaking, possible to natural agencies, were, under the circumstances, supernatural in their nature, and others preternatural and inexplicable modes of the working of observed laws. Every vestige of information we derive from the teaching of the experimental sciences points to the uniformity and consistency of nature. There are to science no inexplicable exceptions. But over against this data there is the continuous and concordant testimony of innumerable witnesses. And, since what we know as miracle is, absolutely speaking, possible, its full historical value, whatever that may be, must be given to this testimony. It will prove on examination to be the one set of exceptions to our scientific uniformity, and is to be assigned to a cause not known to experimental science. That cause is, we claim, the first cause, and therefore, strictly speaking, could not be inferred by any investigation which deals merely with the visible, the measurable, or the ponderable. But when the scientist thinks, unless he is blinded by the material methods in which his science deals, he will not be able to deny the claim of miracle as to its source. When he

examines the historical data as to the fact of miracles, he will not easily be able to deny their occurrence, unless, at the same time, he discards very nearly all historical testimony upon any subject whatsoever. And, unless he is prepared to deny his science and the methods he pursues in acquiring it, he will be unable to avoid the conclusion that the cause of miracles is not one of the ordinary causes of nature, but one beyond and above these, powerful to produce effects which he cannot in any way foretell, and directive of those very causes and effects with which his science has to do. That cause can only be the one to a knowledge of which we have been led by the rational investigations made in the previous chapters. The historical testimony to the actual occurrence of miracles is a confirmatory proof of the existence of God.

CHAPTER XIII

CONFIRMATORY MORAL ARGUMENTS

"Now that rest is in God; nay, it is God." [1]

"That concerning which human nature is agreed must be said to be true." [2]

"In their misfortunes they look not to the Capitol but to Heaven." [3]

In the last chapter we were occupied with a consideration of physical arguments calculated to lead us to an extra-mundane being, the conception of which corresponded more or less closely to that idea which we popularly possess of God. In the present arguments pointing to the same conclusion, but based upon reasons of a moral rather than a physical nature, remain to be considered. It might, of course, be possible to enlarge upon the psychological value of each argument (as indeed in one case I have already done), and to determine to some extent a purely rational basis for each of the human convictions

[1] Boethius: *The Consolations of Philosophy.*

[2] Cicero: *De Natura Deorum.*

[3] Tertullian: *De Testimonio Animæ.*

with which we have now to deal. But such a work would tediously and, I venture to think, quite unnecessarily prolong the treatment of the subject. We should at most be able to advance some theory capable of basing these moral considerations upon rational principles: while as they are in their unanalysed simplicity, they form very strong confirmatory arguments to the truth of a conclusion already directly proved. I shall take them, then, just as they are, and, without either entering upon an examination of their psychological value, or striving to find any metaphysical justification for them, build upon them arguments appealing more directly to the common-sense of man than to his more abstract intellect.

And it is for this precise reason that I use them as of merely corroborative value to the main arguments already adduced. Treated in the manner proposed, they do not prove. They support. They do not conclude in the existence of a first or a last cause, an intellectual and all-designing ruler; but they do witness to a spiritual being superior to man, to whose will his is subject and of whose existence, majesty, and power, he is firmly convinced.

I. The Desire of Happiness

The first of these moral confirmatory arguments is derived from the universal and constant desire of happiness which is found implanted

within the human breast. No matter from what condition of life we select an individual in order to examine this desire of happiness, we shall find: first, that it is present; and secondly, that it is present with definite characteristics. To no matter what degree of happiness our type-individual has already attained, he consistently desires a greater and a higher happiness: and, by a simple process of elimination, we are easily enabled to assert that no created good that we know can fulfil this strong and constant desire. The rich man desires health. The poor man longs for riches. The ignorant yearns for knowledge. The wise craves for a yet greater wisdom. We are able to exhaust the whole catalogue of created goods, without finding one which can assuage or satisfy. Nay more, a combination of them, or all taken together, is as impotent to satiate the desire of happiness as any single one alone. Nor is this in the slightest degree surprising when we reflect that the only possession which could fulfil man's idea of happiness or surfeit his longing is that of a spiritual being endowed with truth in the fullest possible manner. For man is not only an animal. He is himself a reasonable and an intellectual creature, and no good that is not spiritual has any proportion to the requirements of his own spiritual

nature. Indeed neither he nor his fellows, though both spiritual and endowed with a share of truth, can suffice for his entire happiness.

He realises that intellectual limitations constitute in human nature a bar to the possibility of its being the sufficient good for which he longs. And he therefore turns to a spiritual good higher than that of any created humanity as alone possessing those characteristics which—he realises it—are necessary for his enjoyment of that happiness towards which he tends and for which he longs. Now it is impossible to imagine that human nature is so unreasonably constituted as to tend by necessity and always towards a point which it can never reach; that its natural longing exists but to be frustrated; that this craving for real happiness, so constant and so universal, is but an illusion never to become a reality. Such a thought, even if it could be admitted, would never tear that longing from the fibres of our being. We should still crave and still hope, in spite of all such false philosophy, for a fulness and a completeness of happiness. And we should do so with a conviction that our craving would be satisfied and our hope fulfilled. Consequently, it is a conclusion which we must accept, a conclusion based upon the assumption that our nature is not a monstrous contradiction. Some spiritual good does indeed

exist, superior to the intelligence of man and identified with truth in an excellent degree. In this conclusion, and by this conclusion only, can we at the same time account for our constant and increasing desire of happiness, and at the same time reconcile the cravings of our nature with the cold scrutiny of our intellect. The desire demands its satisfaction. The existence of the longing postulates the being in which alone it can find rest. And this intellectual being, higher than, and superior to, merely human intelligences, in which we can find our happiness and satisfaction, is what, in popular language, is known as God.

II. Moral Judgements

Man, as we saw in Chapter XI., possesses a certain knowledge, a conviction, of the first principles of morality as well as of those of reason. His judgements as to right and wrong in the abstract are as universal and as peremptory as those by which his thoughts are conditioned. He is never really in doubt as to which guide he ought to follow —his reason or his passions—and, as a very general truth, it might be observed that primary conclusions as to concrete actions based upon these principles are, in the very great majority of cases, identical. But—and this we know from the overwhelming record of history as well as from the personal observations which we ourselves have all made—the worldly lot of the individual who freely breaks the

laws by which he feels himself bound is not always worse, and very frequently is better, than that of him who consistently and freely observes those laws and follows the dictates of his conscience or reason.

Now, if we stop here, we are confronted with a palpable difficulty. On the one hand we have the categoric command of our reason ordering or forbidding certain actions; on the other we find the effects of the course of action adopted quite out of keeping with the precepts by which we feel ourselves bound. Here again, either our human nature is utterly inexplicable and irrational, guided by a monstrous combination of necessary and yet useless and untrue moral principles: or else—there is only one other possible hypothesis to be admitted—there exists a being, a lawgiver, to whom the whole human race owes allegiance. It is useless to refer the precepts of our reasonable nature, if they lead us to perform actions which are in reality of no direct use to us in our present and personal life but rather quite the contrary, to the good of the entire race. For it will readily be admitted that such a consideration rarely, if ever, enters into the slightest deliberation preceding action. And if these precepts are for the good of the whole, and if we possess them instinctively, it is so obviously the result of deliberate and orderly arrangement that, on this account alone, an intelli-

gent and absolute creator is validly to be inferred by our reason. To avoid going over the same ground again, I refrain from any further consideration of this point: but it will not be useless here to draw the attention of the reader to the fact that action is fundamentally good or bad only in reference to the free will from which it proceeds. Moral good and moral evil are rooted in the will itself; so much so that, without the free exercise of his will, we cannot and do not hold any individual responsible for his actions, nor in such a case do we ever, strictly speaking, say that he has committed a crime or a sin.

From this it is an easy transition to the statement that the wish to do evil or the desire to do good, either in general or in any particular form, falls under the same precepts as those directing or forbidding actions. In other words, our desire as well as our deeds are subject to the dictates of our conscious reason. The identical difficulty of reconciliation again confronts us. Either that conscious reason is wholly unreasonable or there exists a being, other than ourselves and superior to us, to whom we are directly responsible and who will reward or punish in a future life. The first supposition is unthinkable for reasonable beings. The truth of the latter is logically necessitated in view of the facts that such happiness as

is possible in this world does not always follow upright moral desires, and that frequently it is possessed by those whose desires are immoral and contrary to their conscience. There seems, in short, to be little or no immediate connection in this life between moral goodness and happiness, moral evil and misery: and to justify the existence of those moral principles which we undoubtedly possess, no less than the craving of our rational nature for happiness, we are forced to conclude that, therefore, a lawgiver superior to ourselves, to whom we are personally responsible, who sanctions his laws with proportionate reward and punishment:—briefly, that God exists.

III. Common Consent of Mankind

The third confirmatory argument which remains to be considered is that drawn from the common consent of mankind to the truth that God in reality does exist. Like the two preceding ones, it rests upon the supposition that human nature is not entirely unreasonable. With regard to this common consent of mankind, it is noticeable that as to time and place it is practically universal; that its origin can only be assigned to some sort of evidence for the existence of God to which it testifies; and that it does not contradict any principle of reason or experience, but rather concords with the conclusions of the demonstrative arguments already considered. It will be well also

to note that, although universal consent witnesses to the existence of God, the conceptions as to what God is vary indefinitely and vastly. This fact in no way affects the argument drawn from the premisses. It is obviously very different to define a being superior to man and to assert that such a being exists: and at present we are only concerned with the existence and not with the varied conceptions of the nature of the deity whom man feels impelled to worship. It is a comparatively easy task to explain the diversity of conception in uneducated, rude, and savage people when we remember how very little, with all our education, learning, and thought, we can know of the nature of that being whose existence we necessarily infer from the world of sensible things. The distinction drawn by Cicero is still true and to the point.[1] "There is no race of men so savage or so wild as not to know that it must have a God, even if it is in ignorance as to what sort of a God it should be." In the first place, then, this consent is common and universal. It was so recognised by the ancients, witness among others the astute Roman philosopher just quoted and the historian Plutarch. It is admitted to-day. Max Müller

[1] "In hominibus nulla gens est neque tam immansueta neque tam fera, quæ non, etiamsi ignoret qualem habere Deum deceat, tamen habendum sciat" (*de Leg.* 1. 8. 24).

says,[1] "All nations join in some way or other in the words of the Psalmist, 'It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves.'" And Peschel,[2] Roscoff,[3] Tylor,[4] among many others who make this particular class of work their study, bear witness to the same fact. Indeed there is no contrary evidence worth mentioning. All that has been adduced has been successfully disputed and disproved: and objections to the universality of consent in this matter have generally been found to be insufficiently based upon a misunderstanding of the nature of the deity worshipped. The sage of Tusculum may again be quoted, "There is no race so savage, no man so monstrous, as not to have belief in the Gods. Many hold false opinions concerning them . . . but all testify to a divine nature and power."[5]

But this universal consent of nations can only

[1] *Science of Language,* p. 436.

[2] *Völkerkunde.*

[3] *Das Religionswesen der rohesten Naturvölker.*

[4] *Primitive Culture.*

[5] "Nulla gens tam fera, nemo omnium tam sit immanis, cujus mentem non imbuerit deorum opinio:—Multi de diis prava sentiunt: (id enim vitioso more effici solet:) omnes tamen esse vim et naturam divinam arbitrantur: nec vero id collocutio hominum aut consensus effecit: non institutis opinio est confirmata, non legibus. Omni autem in re consensio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est." — *Tusc,* lib. i. cap. 13.

have its origin in an evidence of the existence of a deity to be worshipped. Else it must be admitted that human reason has a natural bias towards falsehood. If, in practically every case, reason has reached the conclusion that issues in this common accord of peoples without sufficient evidence, then undoubtedly reason is on the whole untrustworthy and insecure. What is held consistently and at all times by all is true, else reason and human nature are inexplicable and monstrous—an alternative, as has already been remarked, which no reasoning being would admit. It is useless and absurd to suppose that in such a case, where all men, at all times, and in all places, hold without any doubt the existence of a divinity to whom worship must be paid, no matter with what attributes that divinity is clothed in various times or places by the imagination of man, his reason has led him astray from the truth or he has evolved a conclusion far exceeding the premisses upon which he based it. And therefore, to save ourselves from the stultifying thought that reason may be essentially unreasonable and the human intellect a guide to error instead of to truth, we must admit that a deity does indeed exist, and that the evidence of the existence of God is the only cause to which can be assigned the common

consent of mankind regarding it. Nor is such a conclusion in any way strained or unnatural. The demonstrative arguments already presented to the reader are in no sense new or wonderful. In the simplest and least critical form in which they could be followed up, any one would be sufficient to account for the universality of the consent. And they are so exceedingly natural and rational that, even if not consciously elaborated, they are capable of producing and of rationally accounting for this common conclusion of the human race. It is far more likely to be true to suppose that the evidence producing it was precisely of this nature than of any other. But in any case the fact demands an explanation, and no other explanation is possible than that God, a superior being who is to be worshipped, exists.

It will be seen that the third point observable in this common consent has already been anticipated here. There is no principle of reason, there is no scrap of evidence, to contradict it. Even in the rare hypotheses advanced against the existence of God, no direct argument has ever been adduced. No matter what form they take, these hypotheses are but attempts to explain nature upon other lines: and very sorry attempts they generally are. If one real principle of thought, or one undoubted fact of experi-

ence, could be brought forward against the theistic position, it would without doubt have been exploited to the utmost. But no such principle or fact exists. Hypothesis may take what form it please—an eternal and forsaken bathybios, or a thunderstorm, or a dead ancestor, or the forces of nature—but it is incapable of disproving the existence of God. And from the vague labyrinths of confusing words the "if," and "perhaps," and "it seems," which characterise these strained hypotheses and labouring suppositions, it is with a positive relief that we turn to a theism, old and universal as the human race itself, to find in it at the same time an explanation of the mystery of being, and a natural effect of that God whom with common consent it proclaims.

CHAPTER XIV

IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESULTS

"... All knowledge must lead up to one great result, that of an intelligent recognition of the Creator through His works."[1]

Up to this point we have been occupied with the rational proofs of the existence of God. From the demonstrative arguments that have already been advanced, leaving out those that have been used as confirmatory only, we have come to the conclusion of that existence in vague and, though certain, more or less indefinite terms. In each case the result is tinged with the shade and colour of the particular abstraction with which we worked. The proof based upon motion gave us a first and immovable motor; the argument drawn from contingency, a necessary being; and so on. It is as though we had looked upon nature successively through glasses of different hues, each cutting off from us, for the moment, the perception of all other colours. We have now reached a point where we

[1] Sir William Siemens: *Brit. Assoc. Presidential Address*, 1882.

can combine the variously coloured glasses and attempt to perceive the real unity to which we have been led by these different paths of abstraction. It is time to see if, from the results already attained, we are able to know anything of the nature of the uncaused being who exists by and of and in itself.

First of all we must briefly establish the identity of our results. We must show that the necessary being, the first unmoved and immovable motor, the first efficient cause, the highest and pure perfection, the living intellect, the ultimate author of all design and finality are one and the same being. This can be done either by demonstrating the absolute simplicity of God, considered in any one of these abstract forms, or by showing how the idea of each involves that of all the others in itself. It will be as well, perhaps, to employ the latter method, though it may, at a first glance, seem the more difficult of the two.

But first it is not unworthy of notice that the world and each individual contained in it, from which all these conclusions were drawn by the aid of various abstractions, is at the same time one, and contains also all the premisses with which we have been occupied united one with another and not separately existent. It, and each and all of its contents, is contingent, movable, effect, to a degree

only perfect, designed towards an end. In the case of man to all this must be added that he is both living and intelligent. The suggestion of the physical unity perceived here points to a unity in the cause producing it.

But we are able to advance a more conclusive argument than is afforded by this indication. It can be shown that each of these aspects of God involves and includes the other: or, that every one of them, in the last analysis, bears with it the mark of absolute necessity.

For example, the necessary being must also be the first immovable motor because, in the supposition that this were movable, it would not be necessarily what it is; and if any other than the necessary being were the first immovable motor, it would not be in itself a sufficient explanation of the contingency of other beings. Moreover, motion must already have suggested itself to the mind of the reader as essentially contingent and therefore as demanding a necessary being to explain its very existence.

Again, the first efficient cause is the highest perfection. For, if not, there is a perfection, uncaused —since it could not be brought into being by a cause not possessing it—and therefore demanding a further explanation. Such an explanation can only lie within itself. It is the necessary being.

But the first efficient cause is also the necessary being. For, if it is not necessary, it is contingent. And it is impossible to conceive any contingent being as the *first* efficient cause.[1]

Nor can there be two necessary beings, one the efficient cause and the other the most perfect. For they would necessarily differ in some perfection: and that perfection, existent in the one and lacking in the other, would not belong to the former by necessity, since it does not necessarily so belong to the other. Hence the two are identical.

Further, the self-existent living intellect is obviously the same as the cause of design and finality, and both are identified with the necessary being. For, supposing the author of design to be contingent, how can his existence be accounted for? Only by reference to a necessary being to whom the causative design of the contingent designer must also be attributed.

By every road, in every comparison, we are led to the unity and identity of these five conceptions. What is it that unifies and identifies then? Nothing other than that each is a partial view taken from a purely human standpoint of the necessary being—the *ens a se,* as it is termed—the being existent in and of and by itself. In this conception all the others are seen

[1] See chapters v. and vii.

to hold together. The essence, the nature of God, incomprehensible as it is to us, lies in this, that He is the being existing of necessity, the being, as we shall see, whose existence is identified with His nature.

Let us now turn from this brief indication of the identity of that being which we have inferred from the existing world under these several—to us—different and distinct conceptions. We have still to learn what is included in the idea of the necessary being. This is the last result of our reasoning from the data of sense, from the effects actually perceived, from the contingency of being, to their cause. But it is, at the same time, the first and most fundamental philosophical conception of God to which our reasoning has naturally led us. If nothing had ever been created, He would exist; not, indeed, as the actual first efficient or exemplary cause; not as the architect and ruler of a non-existent world; not as the immovable source of motion; but as an absolute being necessarily existing. From this true conception of God we are able to infer something more as to His nature or essence.

Necessary Being

And we must not be surprised if we find that all the ordinary ideas corresponding to and signified by our common terms of language require some considerable modification when applied to a unique

being and one standing in sharp contradistinction to all those, the physical qualities of which our words naturally denote. He is cause; they are effect: and no one of them adequately expresses the fulness of His causal power. Hence we must be prepared to discover that, if we find that He is good, or perfect, or one, He is good and perfect and one in the same essential manner as His creatures who imperfectly declare Him by their goodness, and perfection, and unity, but to a vastly differing extent. We shall find that our ideas, and consequently the terms or words by which we communicate them, are truly expressive as far as they go; but that they fall far short of the reality. We shall learn to think of God, not as good in any of the limited significations which for us naturally express a share in, or participation of, goodness; but as goodness itself in its fullest and completest possible sense. We shall conceive Him, not in the guise of any perfection, limited as we naturally apprehend it by a limited nature, or time, or space; but as the actually unlimited and absolutely essential perfection. Unity, as applied to Him, will mean, not such an accidental unity as that of a pyramid, for example, composed of unit blocks of stone dressed and fitted together; nor such a substantial unity as that of man resulting from a rational soul and a material body; nor, to speak

of a far more abstract mode of unity, such a form of union as the old schoolmen attributed to the angel, following upon its essence joined to a separate existence; but as the simple and absolute and unlimited unity of a being in which there is no composition accidental, physical, metaphysical, or logical.

Such conceptions as these, I admit, are well-nigh beyond the grasp of human reason: but we must, in any consideration of the nature of the first and necessary being, be prepared to find: first, that, as far as we can grasp them and as far as they go, they are true; and secondly, that they are utterly inadequate, and, as conceptions, fall short of the reality to which they are applied. Unless, when we say, for example, "God is good," we take goodness to mean what we ordinarily conceive as goodness, such a statement could have for us no meaning at all. But if, on the other hand, we suppose that the goodness of God means, even for us, no more than the limited goodness which we are accustomed to attribute to beings known by sensation, then we are tacitly limiting what we shall see in a moment is unlimited and illimitable, and this not with any good reason but only by a prejudice of sensation and a confusion of thought.

It will be well, therefore, to preface a short consideration of the terms and phrases employed

in speaking of God; so that, when we come to examine the unfolding of the first and fundamental philosophical conception already alluded to, we may be prepared to grasp the true import of each successive idea, and the full value of each term by which it is conveyed to us. Language

Names and human words, as we have seen, are the immediate signs of our ideas. Ideas are the intellectual expressions of things. Hence our language is employed to express the reality of things as grasped by the intelligence. For this reason, only those things are capable of being expressed in language which are possible objects of our intellectual contemplation. But as our knowledge of the existence of God is entirely derived from knowledge of creatures as related to Him, it follows that our ideas, and therefore our words, primarily and naturally express ideas of reality as *found in creatures*. Hence, though it is possible to speak of the increate God in language primarily denoting and derived from created reality, such language does not express God as He is simply in Himself.

We find in language three sorts of terms applicable to God. The first class consists of those negative assertions which denote the removal of certain imperfections or limited modes of being from our idea; such as, for example, "*in*finite," "*in*corporeal," "*in*create." The second class

embraces those terms which are applied to God considered relatively as to creatures: and this class includes all those conclusions to which we came in considering the world of beings and sensation. God is *thus* said to be the first cause, the necessary being, the creator and designer of the universe. None of the terms included under these two heads express the real nature or essence of God. But in the third class we find terms expressing His nature absolutely and affirmatively. We speak of Him as "being," "living," "good," "powerful," "wise." These terms are employed to denote His substance; and they do directly express it—except in so much as they contain elements of limitation derived by us from the ideas of created beings. Hence, although the ideas corresponding to such terms are true, they have to be stripped and purified of all that belongs to them from their association with creatures, in order to be properly applied to a Creator.

It still remains to be seen in what manner terms applied both to God and to His creatures are used when asserted of Him. Obviously the idea is not *precisely* the same in both cases. The term is not, as it is said, univocal.[1] The idea of a being which is so necessarily is not that of a contingent being; and, though we can assert

[1] *E.g.*, the term *man*, as applied to both Peter and Paul.

"body," or "being," of a stone, a plant, an animal, and a man in absolutely the same sense, we cannot do this when we apply "being," or "living," or "wise," to man and to God.

Nor are our words used only equivocally.[1] They certainly mean something to us: and there is some real connection between creatures and their cause, which could never be expressed by any purely equivocal terminology.

We fall back, therefore, upon analogy[2] as an explanation of the manner in which these terms common to both are used of God and of creatures. And by this we mean—to insist always upon the same point—that apart from the difference of mode in which "being," "life," or "wisdom" are in God (for each of these *is* God) and in creatures, of whom none can be said *to be*, but only *to have*, "being," or "life," or "wisdom," both God and creatures alike are called beings, living beings, wise beings, because of the actuality of existence, life, and wisdom respectively proper to each.

"God"

We have now, to pass over all metaphorical expressions used of God as hardly to be confounded with the terms employed strictly in our

[1] *E.g.*, the use of the term *plough*, as applied to the agricultural instrument and to the constellation.

[2] *E.g.*, the analogy of proportionality.

present investigation, two terms or expressions left, each of which merits a special consideration. The word or term "*God*" itself, which in its origin signifies and connotes the ruling and ordaining of all nature, and thus directly implies an activity, such as that of a first cause or providential designer, comes to signify the divine nature under some such conception as that of the necessary being or the absolutely simple perfection, which accounts for the order and government of all things. The expression *who is*, which is borrowed from the Book of Exodus:—Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν (Septuagint), is the most perfect form in which the nature of God can be brought home to our minds. It expresses merely the infinite plentitude of existence. It does not limit that existence to any particular mode or form. It connotes the eternal *present* of Him for whom there is no past and no future. And thus the idea, to which it corresponds, is one of an infinite and limitless existence, conditioned by no nature, no space, and no time, eternally necessary and sufficient in itself, of itself, and for itself; and, though obtained from an examination of creatures conditioned by their many limitations, without any real or supposed relationship on its part to them, but in the fullest sense of the terms, unconditioned, unlimited, and absolute.

CHAPTER XV

THE NATURE OF GOD

"The aim of Philosophy can be no less than to reach a standpoint so comprehensive, so free from particularism and narrowness, that from it, with a clear light, we can detect and put aside the analogies and metaphors that are inadequate and therefore false." [1]

In the last chapter the first and most fundamental philosophical conception of God was pointed out to be that one in which He is presented to our minds as the necessary and self-sufficient being. The expression *ens a se*, borrowed from the philosophers, is a convenient one to denote that being which in no way depends upon any other, which has its entire reason of existence in itself and, therefore, exists by reason of itself alone and in virtue of its own infinitely complete sufficiency.

Simplicity

The first positive assertion that can be made of such a being is the utter perfection of its simplicity, its perfect freedom from composition of any kind. This is seen to be included in the conception just explained, on account of the entire lack of

[1] Hume: *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion.*

passive potentiality which it connotes. Were there any composition, a change from what was possible to what is would be presupposed: because the composing natures or the component parts are, and must be, naturally prior to any composite being. The cause, therefore, effecting such a composition is naturally prior to and exists before the composed being itself. That the necessary being should also be composite is seen to be an absurdity which reason cannot admit.

If we consider the nature of the first cause or immovable motor—which we have already found to be identified with the necessary being—we shall, perhaps, be enabled to grasp this truth more easily. The first cause considered precisely as it is a cause and as moving cause must be in *act* and cannot conceivably be in any sense the recipient of any actuating principle external to itself. This follows necessarily from the fact that in its nature it is the absolute first cause. Hence it is entirely in act, or actual, and has no conceivable admixture of potentiality. Because it is the absolute first active cause and because it is the necessary being, it is necessarily also a pure act. That is to say, for we are here in the deep waters of metaphysical abstraction, that the vague conception of God which we have already derived by the way of argument from sensible things, includes in itself necessary and pure

actuality and excludes any and every possible kind of passiveness or potentiality. And hence we can at once strike out from our conception of God any defect or limitation arising from the sensitive origin of our ideas.

Thus God is seen not to be a material body: for all material bodies are both composite and passive under external agents. They possess extension and are therefore quantitatively divisible into parts.

Nor is God composed of matter and form;[1] of nature and subsistence; of existence and of essence. Rather, His nature is His subsistence and His essence His existence: or, to insist upon this truth in other words, God is pure existence considered as essence or nature. Hence, since every possible kind of composition is excluded from the nature of God on account of the fact that His being is uncaused and therefore pure actuality, He is said to be absolutely and perfectly simple.

But the simplicity by which we denote God is not in any sense the simplicity of elementary matter. For this, while in itself not composite, is essentially compounded and enters into the composition of other beings. On the contrary, the simplicity of God is a simplicity which essentially does not and cannot enter into composition of any kind.

[1] Cf. *Material and Formal Cause*, chapter ii.

We can go further, and see in this essential impossibility of composition the reason why God is said to be essentially supernatural. He is in every sense above the natural beings which we know sensibly as mere effects of His creative and preserving power. He does not enter into nature, except as causally accounting for its existence and explaining the fact of its possibility and of its actual being.

Perfection

The second assertion which we can now make of God, unfolding it, as it were, from our first idea at its present stage, is that He is most perfect, that He is the absolute perfection. By perfection is ordinarily meant the total completion of a nature. A work is said to be perfect when it is brought about and finished, when it is entirely completed. A being is perfect when it exists complete in the fulness of its nature. Such a being, precisely as it is considered to be complete, is endowed with all that actuality which by right belongs to its nature. Thus a being actually existent to the full extent of its nature comes to be looked upon as a perfect being. Now, since God is, as has been shown, the pure actuality of existence, it follows that He is absolutely perfect in this sense: and since the perfections found to exist in all things owe their origin and existence to Him, He must necessarily possess the sum total of all perfections—or, rather,

He must necessarily *be* the sum total of all perfections—not, indeed, as these exist in nature but, analogically, in one pure and perfect act.

From this it follows that no perfection with which we are naturally acquainted, no matter how high, or beautiful, or noble it may appear to us, can simply or directly exhibit the perfection of God.

As I have already had occasion to note, our language, and with it the perfections which it signifies, is used analogically when employed to denote both God and His creatures. Were we able to see Him by an act of intuition, we should perceive the unique perfection of essence, which all the perfections with which we are acquainted imitate each in its own degree and measure.

Highest Good

From this consideration follows the third assertion as to the nature of God. He is the highest good, the *summum bonum.* For each and every thing is called good and is recognised as good in that precise measure in which it is desirable. But it is only desirable in so far as it is perfect according to its nature. Hence, since God is absolute perfection, He is the highest good: and the highest good not in any merely comparative sense. He contains in Himself, as the exemplary and efficient cause of all that is, the entire goodness of all things; not, indeed, as

this is found in created natures, limited and shared only, but simply and perfectly identified with the existence which is His nature.

Infinity

The fourth assertion following upon the identification of essence and existence in the being of absolute simplicity, is its infinity. This infinity is something positive and not a mere absence of limitation. To us indeed it appears in the latter light, since we obtain the idea of the infinite by removing the limitations implied in our notion of the finite. But all the limitations which are conceivable result from the presence of potentiality or passiveness in the being so limited. The material being is limited by its quantity. It is also limited by the very fact that its substantial form is received in matter. The angel, if the immaterial spirit may be brought forward as an example, is limited by the union of its existence with the nature or essence in which it is received. All these limitations depend upon potentiality, passivity, receptiveness.

But in God there is and can be no such limitation; for He is limited by no potentiality. His perfection, His essence, is pure actuality, limitless existence. There is nothing by which it could be limited. And, consequently, by asserting that He is pure act without any admixture of receptive capacity or potentiality in its passive sense, we

assert simultaneously that He is infinite, utterly unlimited, and illimitable.

The nerve of this inference lies, as has been pointed out, in the identification of essence with existence in God. Our common notion of infinity, on the other hand, is derived from a denial of boundaries to material being. We must be very careful not to confound the one idea with the other. It has already been pointed out that, in itself, the infinite, as applied to God, is something positive and not the mere absence of limitations. It is not the denial of boundaries. For God, considered as utterly simple, cannot be conceived as bounded or not bounded materially at all. It is the infinity of identification, of perfection, of being; and, though the conception differs in nearly every way from that which we vaguely form by denying bounds to space, it is a thinkable, and indeed a necessary, consequence of our first philosophic conception or idea of God.

Immensity and Ubiquity

The fifth assertion is that God is immense or immeasurable. This statement is so obvious that it needs no proof, once it has been allowed that He is infinite. But it includes more than this, for it tacitly asserts that He is ubiquitous, that He exists everywhere. This latter attribute of God is asserted of Him in three ways. He is present in every place and in every being essen-

tially existing in space, as being the true efficient and conserving cause of every created thing that exists. He is present by His knowledge, in that every being is absolutely and perfectly known to and understood by Him as an expression, analogically more or less imperfect, of Himself. He is present by His power in that every being created and preserved by Him depends upon Him for its continued existence. The reason of the ubiquity of God is to be sought for in His operation. He can be in no way mixed, nor can He enter into any sort of composition with the effects of His creation as a part of them, as the world-spirit or the world-soul, because, as we have seen, He is essentially supernatural. His presence must, therefore, be one of contact, not of quantity but of essential causality, and power, and knowledge. That the effects of His causal power should continue to exist without Him is as inconceivable as that they should come into being without an exercise of that same causal power. And, since the causal power *is* God, He is always present in and to His creation.

It is worthy of note that ubiquity is asserted of God dependently on creation. He could not be everywhere, or in every place, if there were no place, or space, or created being. But the conception of His immensity is not thus limited.

He remains immense and immeasurable, because infinite and simple, even when we have by an abstraction of reason destroyed every created being. This immensity is consequently like the infinity of the last assertion, positive and in no way a mere absence of possible measure. God's infinity and His immensity are God. It is as true to say that He is immensity as to assert "God is immense."

Immutability

The sixth assertion is that God is immutable. This again follows directly from the fact that He is pure actuality: and this it is inconceivable to suppose as changeable. For any change presupposes the possibility of the change and a passive potentiality in the being changed. Hence, since the point has already been sufficiently developed, there is no necessity of attempting more here than to point out that the pure actuality of existence by its very essence excludes the possibility of change.

Eternity

God is eternal. This is the seventh assertion as to His nature. It follows directly from His changelessness.

Eternity has been defined as "the simultaneous and perfect possession of endless life."[1] It is not the same in its nature as time, which is successive and ever passing. God's life is measured not by instants in a changing stream of existence but by

[1] Boethius: *Cons. Phil.*, lib. iii., prose ii.

the one instant of the ever present changelessness which is God. And just as time is the measure of motion, so eternity is the measure of perfect rest. There are no parts, because there is no succession. There is no past and no future. All is present and complete. The two ideas of time and of eternity are not relative. They are incommensurable. But, just as time is thought and asserted of things in consequence of the succession of motion, so eternity is thought and asserted of God in consequence of His utter changelessness and immutability. The idea of the eternal is included in that of the necessary being—the *ens a se*—but the conception of changelessness is required to develop it in its fulness. God is eternal because changeless: He is changeless because He is pure actuality. And He is pure actuality because He is the absolutely necessary being.

Unity

Lastly, the eighth assertion is that God is one. By unity, as applied to any being, we mean to convey the idea of actual indivision as belonging to it and of its complete division from all other beings. This latter characteristic is the result of the former, which in itself is and constitutes the essence of unity. The unity of God follows directly from His simplicity and infinity. Any actual or possible division in that which is

essentially simple and absolutely infinite is inconceivable. A unity such as this differs from that of creatures in that the latter, though actually undivided, is still divisible; whereas that of the *ens a se* is as indivisible as it is undivided.

As noted before, to press home still further the notion of unity, were there more than one God (two, for example, under any of the concepts in which the conclusions are presented to our minds) they would differ in perfection: and that in which the distinguishing perfection lacked, would neither be simply perfect nor infinite. Hence there cannot conceivably be more than one God. To recapitulate and to sum up the results obtained in this chapter: God is utterly perfect in simplicity and freedom from composition of any kind; absolute perfection and causally comprehending all the perfection of creatures; the highest good, not in any sense of comparison, but absolutely; infinite, not negatively as denying limitation, but positively as incommensurable with that which is limited; immense in the comprehension of an all-pervading presence; immutable or changeless in an eternity of absolute rest.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

"... I feel impelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man, and I deserve to be called a Theist." [1]

We have by no means exhausted the absolute perfections of the infinite being by the cursory examination made of some of them in the last chapter. Were our reason strong enough, were our comprehension unlimited, we should doubtless see God with an infinite and an intuitive knowledge. In such an intuition we should see all our fragmentary conceptions, such as those just discussed, combined in one essential unity admitting of no real distinction. But we have no such intuitive knowledge. The universe in which we read the existence of God is not unlike a book of printed characters in which we do not find the whole nature of its author displayed, but only a design and a doctrine from which we are enabled to infer something at least in his regard.

[1] *Life of Charles Darwin:* edited by Francis Darwin.

We can deduce his science, his command of materials, his rational disposing of evidence, his will to write, from the mere printed characters and symbols disposed in lines across the page. The parallel is not a very apt one, for we have a knowledge of man apart from his productions and read it into our inference. Nevertheless we do reach God in this inferential manner; and having so reached Him, we allow His nature to unfold itself as it were. We develop it from the first philosophical conception in which it is implicitly contained.

We have now one more assertion to make of God, derived originally from the nature of a particular class of His effects. And here our idea is one obtained from and compounded of an indefinite number of notes, of purely accidental qualifications and limitations, which render it peculiarly complex and embarrassing. We must be resolutely prepared to strip all such accidental matter from our conception, until we find that we have reduced it to the absolute minimum which denotes, and does not do more than denote, the essential nature to which the idea in reality corresponds.

Personality

God is a person. He is not a mere vague abstraction. He is not a being corresponding to an idea empty of contents. To use a limitation

not sanctioned by His nature but arising from our mode of conceiving things, He possesses all that goes to make up personality in an excellent degree. His personality is His being, just as His nature is His existence; for all is identified in the absolute essence of changeless perfection which is the *ens a se* or necessary being.

There is a very common and a very general distrust and dislike of the word "person" as applied to God. It seems to imply limitations inconsistent with the illimitable being. This attitude of distrust is not only to be found among those who urge their conception of personality as a direct objection to the proofs of God's existence. We do not find it actually employed as a refutation of any conception of God's nature by the opponents of theism alone. It exists in the minds of those who profess a belief in a Deity. There are not wanting even those who call themselves Christians who picture to themselves a sort of glorified human being as their God. He is for them, doubtless, a very wonderful human being: an eternal and, if a contradiction may be used in order to express the incongruity of the thought, an infinite one. So deeply has the anthropomorphic conception of God become ingrained by a persistent loose usage of terms, by a vaguely popular and loose theology on the

part of its exponents, and by a slothful negligence and intellectual carelessness on the part of those taught, that it is quite possible to find many whose conception of the Deity would not be incorrectly expressed by a magnified minister in broadcloth and a white tie, who is in some wonderful fashion acquainted with all our actions and thoughts, who perpetually points to passage after passage in an etherealised though printed version of the Scriptures, and who runs on through seventeenthly and eighteenthly in an eternal recapitulation of his own omniscient knowledge.

An indescribable feeling of a friendship formed in some unknown way with this individual is religion. An attempt to oblige or please Him is morality. On the whole He is a very beneficent and kind being. He promises endless happiness in the City of golden streets and many excellently furnished mansions. We shall sing the Book of Psalms through and through unceasingly to the accompaniment of harps: and, after all, if we do disobey Him, He is too good to have made us for eternal punishment; and, somehow or other, it will all come right in the long run.

Some such belief as this—perhaps a little crudely expressed—is far more common than not. It is very pretty; but it has the unfortunate dis-

advantage of being false. Whatever is anthropomorphic in tendency is inconsistent with the nature of God as it has already been demonstrated: and, consequently, if our idea of a person is *necessarily* anthropomorphic, God cannot be a person. The difficulty lies, not in God, but in the conception which we form of personality.

What is a Person?

Thus, in order to reach a true conception of the thing we must consider what it is that makes an individual known to us as a person, we must know what a person really is. Now a person means for us no more than an individual existing in a definite and particular nature. The person is the individual; but it is not merely an individual in the same sense as the stone or the plant is. Each of these, and every being that exists, is individual in this sense, precisely because it exists undivided in itself and divided off, as it were, from everything else that exists. But the person is the individual that is rational; the being possessing a rational nature and endowed with all the qualities and perfections that naturally flow from such a nature.

We are acquainted with persons such as we are ourselves, and learn to recognise and distinguish one from the other, by the thousand little marks that, taken together, seem to go towards the constituting of this one individual being and no

other. The form and features, with their unique peculiarities, the tricks of speech or thought manifested to us, the habits and characteristics which we find in one rational individual or person, are not all to be found together present in any other. The indications of personality are innumerable: and from these our notion is primarily derived.

We are apt to look upon the person as constituted by these innumerable peculiarities, rather than as merely manifested to us by them. Sometimes we are led to consider him as the result of his characteristics, rather than to realise that the characteristics are, as indeed they must be, the result of his personality. And yet, without change in the latter and without any altered apprehension on our part, we know that the underlying personality persists and remains the same, while its peculiarities and characteristics change indefinitely or pass away altogether. Form and features, modes of thought and speech, habits and peculiarities, all are undergoing perpetual modification. The back becomes rounded, the hair scant and white, the eyes dim, the face furrowed and altered, the voice cracked, the understanding dulled, the will impaired, under the advance of old age. And yet the *person* is the same as he was in early boyhood or in the prime and vigour of life.

The indications, peculiarities, and characteristics are not and do not form the person but are a result of his personality. Hence we must seek deeper than the surface for an adequate conception of what we mean by the term. The person is the being possessing such and such characteristic qualities in virtue of his own personality. That is to say, a person is the individual substance of a rational nature. It is that in which his characteristics come together as accidents in a substance. Among these characteristics are to be included self-consciousness, intellect, and will, as well as any others that he may possess. The human nature that we know, as differing from the human person, is rational, and consequently volitional. But the human nature does not naturally exist at all as a human nature. It is found only in persons, which are thus individually existing human natures terminated, as it were, by their own proper personalities.

Four Notes of Personality

There are thus four notes discovered in an accurately formed idea of a person. He is an individual. He is subsistent. He has a nature which is considered both as complete and as rational. And these four notes are applicable to that being of whom, as God, the existence has already been proved.

Individuality

That He is an individual in the highest and

most absolute sense of the term we have already seen in the consideration of His unity. In this perfect individuality of unity which is seen to result from the consideration of the simple infinity of God there is only the note of "oneness." It is not even contrasted with plurality. The common term here, as the others each in its place, is used transcendentally to include both God and His creatures. But there is no real relationship on the part of the Creator to His Creation,[1] and hence He is individual, not as essentially divided off from other things, which have no existence apart from Him, nor as a real unity resulting from the fusion of constitutive principles, but in the unique sense of that absolute indivisibility which is, as we have seen, perfectly identified with His nature.

Subsistence

The second note of personality—subsistence—is almost too obviously seen in God to need any explanation. And yet He does not subsist as substances familiar to our reason underlie or support the qualities and appearances inherent in them. We think of qualities belonging to things: and we call the things to which the qualities belong substances. They subsist and

[1] Such relationship must be denied as implying possible change in the immutable. On the other hand there is a very real relationship to God on the part of His creatures.

are, it is true, but not of themselves. They only exist in virtue of their dependence upon God. Their qualities result in and are dependent upon them. He is, independently of any cause, in the pure simplicity of His being: and His qualities or attributes are absolutely identified with His essential nature. He is substance in the true and formal sense of the term, *minus* the one limitation of created substance. He is in the fullest sense a reality existing in itself and not in any other as in a subject. The limiting clause of the definition of substance—whose existence is not its very essence—must be left out, for reasons already sufficiently considered, when the conception is applied to Him whose essence and existence are identically the same.

Complete Nature

The third note, of nature considered as complete, is applicable to God inasmuch as His infinity is identified with His pure simplicity and perfection. He is a complete nature, as He is perfect, not because He is completed or perfected in any way, but because He actually contains the infinite plentitude of being. If we are accustomed to consider limited and finite beings as complete, and to transfer to this term a signification of their totality of existence as applied to them, how much more are we able to employ it in such a sense when attributing it

to that absolutely infinite and plenary existence to whose causal activity all finite completion and perfection is due. The complete nature or essence of God does not consist in this that He is completed in any one particular line of perfection or being; but that He is infinite in all perfection and being alike.

Intellectual

The fourth note of personality, as applied to the infinite author of design and creator of rational beings, together with the laws of their reason and their will, is that of rationality.

The reasoning beings from which we derive our primary knowledge of the nature of reason are none other than ourselves: and we discover in the perfection of our own human reasoning a limiting imperfection. No limiting imperfection can exist in God because of His infinite perfection. His rationality cannot consist in any such reasoning from premisses to conclusion as we know. This would be incompatible with His utterly changeless and complete nature. Rather is its likeness to be found in our intelligent self-consciousness and our understanding of first principles, the truth of which is seen and assented to immediately their import is grasped. Even here we may discover the presence of limitation and consequent imperfection. But in God, the primal and exemplary cause of all things, human reason and human will

included, reason taken to mean the most perfect knowledge of all actual and all possible truth must exist; and this without the least limitation or imperfection of any kind.

An animal is said not to be a reasoning being, not because it has no sense-perceptions, not because it cannot judge between what is harmful and what is beneficial to itself, but because it is incapable of possessing knowledge in the proper sense of the word. Man, it is true, can acquire knowledge: but he acquires it imperfectly and by means of the mental process known as reasoning. And knowledge, as used here in its strict sense, is the intimate acquaintance of things known through and in their causes. Then only can we be said to know anything, when its causes are completely known to us.

It is not necessary that the acquisition of such an intimate acquaintance with causes as this is should be limited to the imperfect form which we know as reasoning. The first principles upon which all our science rests are not known in this fashion; and yet they are and appear more certain to us than any other natural knowledge we possess. Rather is it in the perfection of knowledge, than in the limited mode of acquiring it, that the rational consists, although the term itself is first used to denote the imperfect form.

Consequently in God, as cause and exemplary of reason and of will, as infinite and as ruling intelligence, we perceive rationality in its plentitude. His knowledge is perfect self-consciousness, perfect knowledge of Himself—and consequently perfect knowledge of the uncaused cause. And, if science is the knowledge of causes, what science can be more perfect than this—than a most intimate acquaintance of His own nature as imitable by all the secondary causes and by all the effects which do or can proceed from it?

The indications which lead us to assert understanding, science, or knowledge, of God are those already alluded to. The fundamental reason justifying such an assertion is His perfect simplicity and consequent immateriality. The principle of life, or soul, which we as intellectual beings possess, has a faculty which is able to receive notions of other things in itself. It is, in consequence, due to its limited grade of immateriality that it is a capable subject of knowledge; since, were it material it would be unable to understand material things. It is sufficient for our purpose here to point out, by way of analogy, that the eye, if already informed with any one colour, would not respond to any stimulus naturally productive of a sensation of that colour; since seeing is an alteration of the faculty of vision from a mere potentiality to its

corresponding act. Hence, since God is supremely immaterial, it follows that He has most perfect knowledge. And, since He is also pure actuality, considered as understanding, He cannot receive notions of causes from without, as does our intelligence.

Our mode of understanding is of such a nature that it is, as it were, no more than a potential receptivity of ideas. It is passive, and it becomes active only when an idea is present to it. But such a change as that from a passive to an active state is, as we have already seen, impossible in God. Considered as understanding, therefore, His entire knowledge must be intimately present to His intellect. It cannot come from without; and, indeed, must always be present in the same infinite degree, because He is infinite and immutable. It cannot, moreover, be anything considered as distinct from Himself, because composition is as unthinkable as it is unreal in the utterly simple. Hence God's understanding must be God, unchangeable, perfect, and infinite. And in that understanding which is God, all actual and possible truth is intimately known in one eternal actuality of understanding

From these considerations it necessarily follows that God is in the highest and truest sense a person, of whom our human personalities are but imperfect

and inadequate shadows. He is a person endowed with the plentitude of every perfection, life, intellect, will, and power: not as we understand these perfections, existing merely as qualities in those beings with which we are naturally familiar, but as one single and infinite nature, whose entirety can be summed up, though never fully presented to our finite minds, by the expression "Necessary Being."

So far we have travelled upon our path guided by the light of natural reason alone. We cannot penetrate the "inaccessible light" of truth in which God is clothed with our soul's frail and finite vision. We conceive, indeed, a vastness and an infinity which, as we realise, we are unable to understand, and, in the mere conception, our humanly acquired knowledge appears as the "clouds and darkness" beneath the feet of the Deity.

Such doctrines as that of the Trinity or the Incarnation are not attainable by the pure light of reason. But in the strength of that natural knowledge to which our reasoning has led us already, we may easily perceive the lines upon which a treatise dealing with the possibility of a supernatural revelation should be laid. Its corner stone will be the personality of God as apprehended by reason; and thus supernatural truth will be based upon natural, revelation will be the complement of reason, and faith of knowledge.

The vivifying inbreathing of the Divine will quicken the cold result of the natural mental process; and the existence of God from a mere fact of knowledge will be transformed into a principle of life. "The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power also and divinity:"[1] and "God having spoken on divers occasions, and many ways, in times past, to the fathers by the prophets; last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son."[2]

These are the two foundations upon which, in the order of the purely natural reason, the Christian religion rests:—God perceived in His works by His rational creatures and the supernatural revelation of His Christ.

I here bring my task of presenting the rational arguments for the existence of God, and of developing our ideas of His nature, to an end. It remains for the reader to approve and assimilate the proofs, and to follow up for himself the unfolding of the conception.

This work, as it stands, is no more than a mere arrangement of words. It can be made convincing and conclusive only by the individual thought, the intellectual assimilation, the logical acceptance, of

[1] Romans i. 20.

[2] Hebrews i. 12.

its readers. In their apprehension by reason alone can the truths set forth in the foregoing pages become a co-ordinate part of knowledge.

I therefore submit them to the scrutiny of right reason and the investigation of careful thought, confident, as I have more than once already had occasion to state, that whatever the difficulties of the doctrine may be, they will not prove insurmountable to the man who thinks. Indeed, so simple and so convincing is the force of the inference from the world to its creator and from human beings to a personal God, that any sane school of philosophic thought must echo the words of the writer of the Book of Wisdom:—"But all men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God; and who by these good things that are seen, could not understand him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman."[1] "For by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby."[2] In fine "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands."[1] And the development of this thesis has been the occasion and constitutes the substance of this volume.

[1] Wisdom, xiii., v. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, v. 5.

[3] Psalm xviii. 1.

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